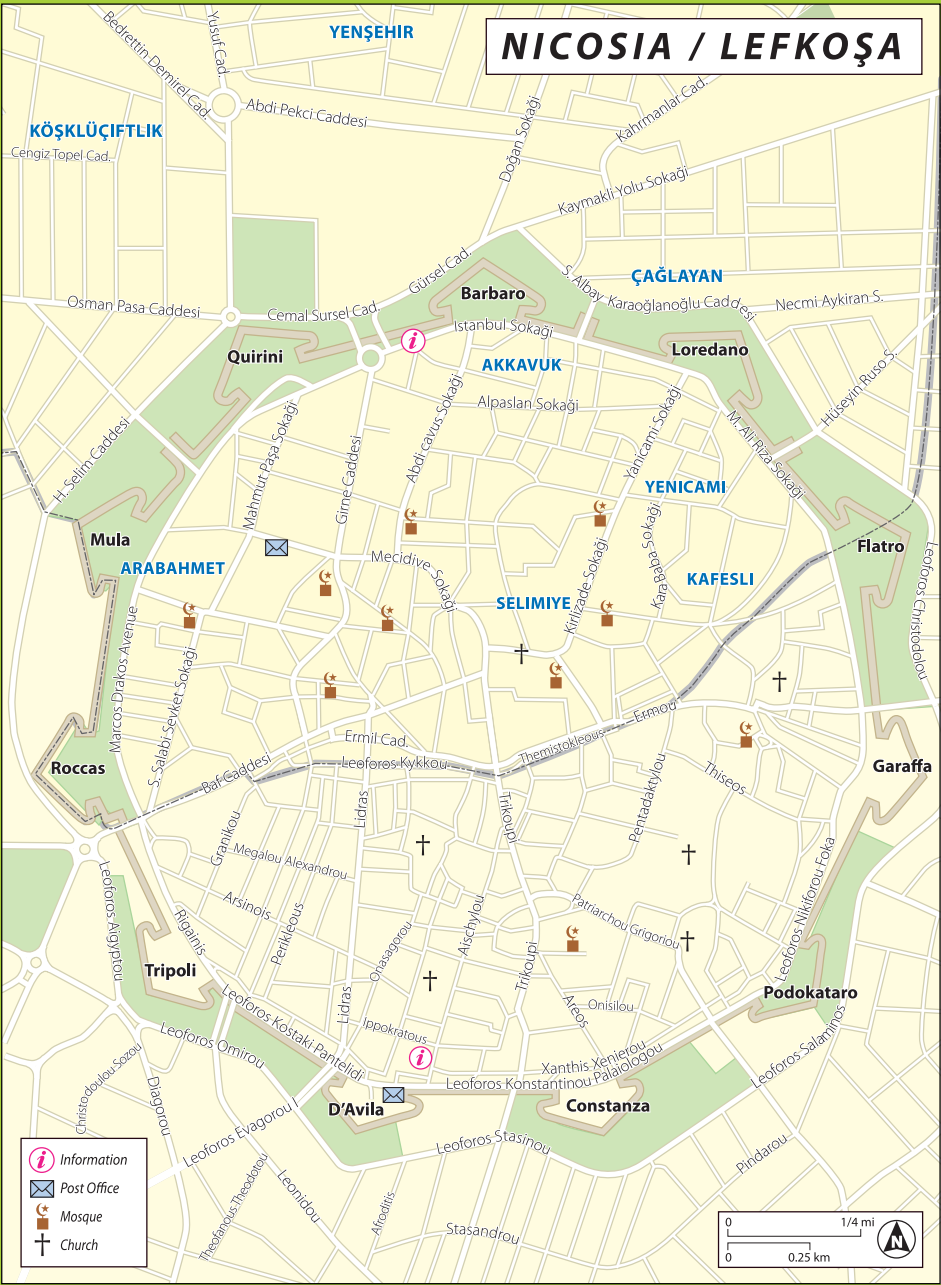


Cyprus day_{BY}day™

29 Smart Ways to See the Island

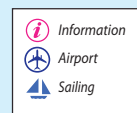


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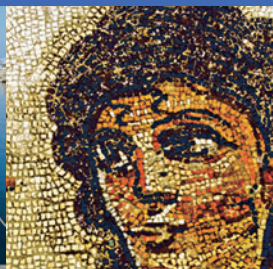
Mediterranean Sea



Frommer's™

Cyprus day_{BY}day™

1st Edition



by Sue Bryant &
Melissa Shales

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Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England
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A Note from the Editorial Director

Organizing your time. That's what this guide is all about.

Other guides give you long lists of things to see and do and then expect you to fit the pieces together. The Day by Day guides are different. These guides tell you the best of everything, and then they show you how to see it *in the smartest, most time-efficient way*. Our authors have designed detailed itineraries organized by time, neighborhood, or special interest. And each tour comes with a bulleted map that takes you from stop to stop.

Hoping to see the sunrise over the Rock of Aphrodite, catch a glimpse inside the church at Kykkos Monastery or feast on meze in a local taverna? Planning to rent a cool Agrotourism stone house, splash in mountain streams or just feel the hot, soft sand between your toes? Whatever your interest or schedule, the Day by Days give you the smartest routes to follow. Not only do we take you to the top attractions, hotels, and restaurants, but we also help you access those special moments that locals get to experience—those “finds” that turn tourists into travelers.

The Day by Days are also your top choice if you're looking for one complete guide for all your travel needs. The best hotels and restaurants for every budget, the greatest shopping values, the wildest nightlife—it's all here.

Why should you trust our judgment? Because our authors personally visit each place they write about. They're an independent lot who say what they think and would never include places they wouldn't recommend to their best friends. They're also open to suggestions from readers. If you'd like to contact them, please send your comments our way at feedback@frommers.com, and we'll pass them on.

Enjoy your Day by Day guide—the most helpful travel companion you can buy. And have the trip of a lifetime.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Regan". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'K' and 'R'.

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director
Frommer's Travel Guides

About the Authors

Sue Bryant is an award-winning travel writer and editor specialising in the Mediterranean region. She writes for various national newspapers in the UK and for magazines and websites worldwide and has written, edited or contributed to 22 travel guidebooks, including *Frommer's Cyprus With Your Family*. Sue has been visiting Cyprus every year since the late 1980s, writing about food, wine, ecotourism, golf, adventure, spas and family travel . . . and is still amazed to discover something new every time. She lives in London with her two children, Lauren and Joel.

Freelance travel writer, **Melissa Shales**, has written around 30 guides, including half a dozen on Turkey, and edited many more; for details, see www.melissashales.co.uk.

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An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while travelling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system**. Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). In addition to the star-rating system, we also use a **kids icon** to point out the best bets for families. Within each tour, we recommend cafes, bars or restaurants where you can take a break. Each of these stops appears in a shaded box marked with a coffee cup-shaped bullet .

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

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A Note on Prices

In the "Take a Break" and "Best Bets" sections of this book, we have used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for 1 night in a hotel (the price of a double-occupancy room) or the cost of a main course (entree) at a restaurant. Use the following table to decipher the dollar signs:

Cost	Hotels	Restaurants
\$	under \$100	under \$10
\$\$	\$100–\$200	\$10–\$20
\$\$\$	\$200–\$300	\$20–\$30
\$\$\$\$	\$300–\$400	\$30–\$40
\$\$\$\$\$	over \$400	over \$40

How to Contact Us

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travellers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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South Cyprus:

10 Favourite Moments



S. Cyprus: 10 Favourite Moments

10 Favourite Moments



Previous page: Swimmers near the Rock of Aphrodite.

There's so much more to Cyprus than meets the eye. Away from the busy coastal resorts you'll find splashing mountain streams, shady forests, tiny stone villages virtually untouched by time, ravishingly beautiful monasteries and tavernas serving organic, locally-grown food. There's a wonderful satisfying element of surprise as Cyprus reveals itself through its cuisine, local wine, 2,000 years of history and the friendly local people, always happy to strike up a conversation.

1 Sunrise over the Rock of Aphrodite. Many people prefer sunset but I like to pay my respects to the birthplace of the goddess of love early in the morning, the chalky white rock glows pink, the air is clear and the sea at the base of the cliffs is a translucent turquoise. See p 33, **4**.

2 The first glimpse inside the church in Kykkos Monastery. The wealth in the monastery is awe-inspiring, the ceilings dripping with gold and silver incense holders and ornaments, beautiful original icons adorning the altar and one priceless gilt-encased piece housed in a mother-of-pearl shrine. If you only visit one monastery, make it this one. See p 37, **8**.

3 Lunch at The Last Castle on the edge of Akamas. This is a

somewhat quirky taverna, its crumbling exterior surrounded by rusting farm equipment and banana palms. It was formerly a crusader stronghold, high on the cliffs and overlooks the wild, uninhabited Akamas Peninsula for miles. Walk the craggy Avakas Gorge below and enjoy a late lunch or afternoon meze with cold beers in the taverna until the sun sets over Paphos in the distance. See p 52, **5**.

4 A picnic by the Kelefos Medieval Bridge. Buried deep in the Troodos Mountains, uncover a series of 500-year-old bridges built by the Venetians, originally used as the island's main thoroughfare for transporting copper from the mines in the Troodos to the coastal ports. Graceful and immaculately preserved, the Kelefos Medieval Bridge

The magnificent Greco-Roman Kourion amphitheatre.





Through the shady forest on the Caledonian Trail.

is a popular forest picnic site; I love sitting here under the trees with my feet in the cooling river water. *See p 61, 3.*

5 Ballet at Kourion. The magnificent Greco-Roman Kourion amphitheatre near Limassol is used for ballet and theatrical performances in summer, absolutely magical as the sun goes down over the sea and the spotlights slowly illuminate the dancers. *See p 73, 1.*

6 Staying in a Cypriot village. Village life is peaceful and traditional, until the cockerels and donkeys start up in the mornings! Rent a cool agrotourism stone house, in **Tochni** for example, frequent the local *kafetion* (village meeting place), take walks in the countryside and feast on meze and drink organic wines in the local taverna. *See p 13, 11.*

7 Hiking the Caledonian Trail.

One of the many marked walking trails, the Caledonian is great as it's downhill all the way through shady, deciduous forest, with stepping stones backwards and forwards over the river and some picnic spots with views of the surrounding mountains through gaps in the trees. Dive into a forest pool under a waterfall at the base of the trail to cool off. *See p 49, 1.*

8 Meeting the turtle conservationists on Lara Beach.

Lara Beach on the Akamas Peninsula is one of the Mediterranean's last breeding grounds for turtles, which lay their eggs here in spring. You can visit the temporary campsite of the turtle-minders, learn about the endangered reptiles and hold a tiny turtle in your hand. *See p 45, 2.*

9 The Limassol Wine Festival.

A wild, bacchanalian week in September, the annual Limassol Wine Festival brings several days of tasting, bands playing, food stalls, dancing and partying late into the night. It's free to attend and as well as being one of Limassol's biggest celebrations, is a matter of great importance to locals, many of whom are involved in the wine trade. *See p 157.*

10 Summer nights around Limassol Castle.

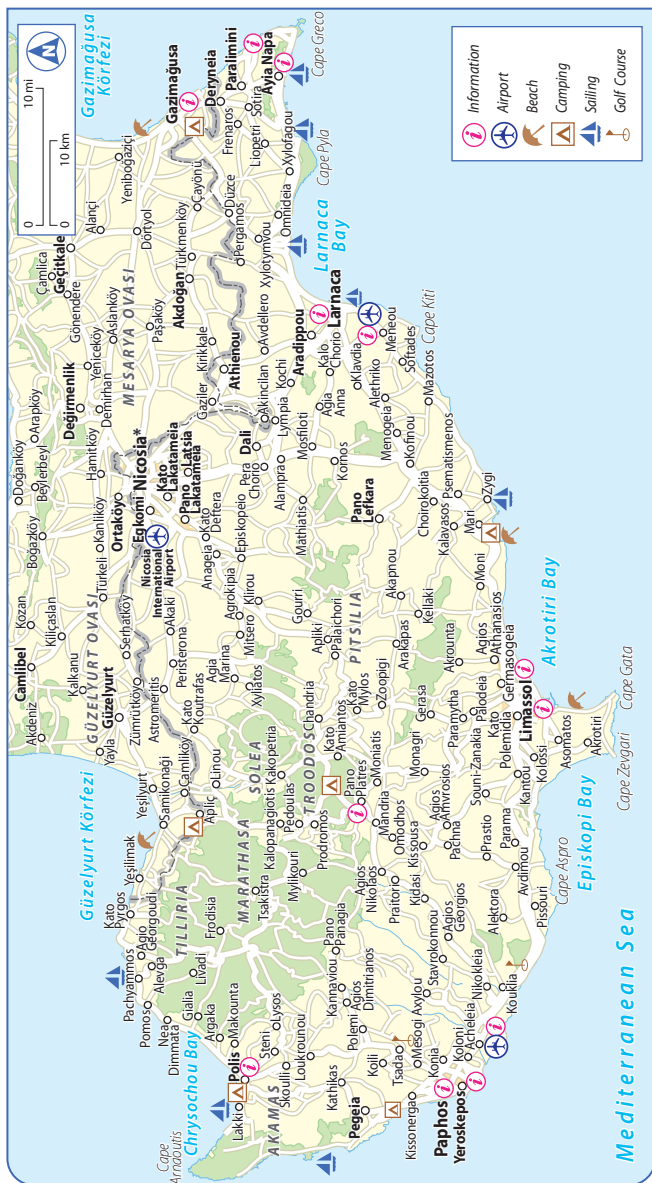
Limassol's medieval castle is encircled by lively and fashionable bars and restaurants from traditional Cypriot to modern Mediterranean, many of them in restored warehouses and all with al fresco seating. What I love about this setting is that its natural centrepiece is the floodlit castle; if you book ahead, you'll get a seat with an uninterrupted view across the gardens surrounding the 500-year-old fortress. *See p 76, 4.*

1

Strategies for Seeing the Island



Strategies for Seeing the Island



Previous page: Ayia Napa harbour.

The single most important thing to remember about Cyprus is that the tiniest scratch of the surface will reap great rewards. The tourist trail is well trodden here but there is so much to uncover to make the most of the rich cuisine, the archaeological sites, the beaches, mountains and countryside. You will need a car and an adventurous spirit. You will, without doubt, stray from your intended route but Cypriots are extremely hospitable and there will always be somebody willing to help with directions. See the journey as part of the Cypriot experience and your visit will be all the more rewarding.

Rule #1: Most visitors will need a car for independent travel

Public transport on Cyprus is not suitable for touring; buses do not connect places in a way that's logical for a touring holiday and there are no trains. The road network is excellent and large towns linked by the motorways are mainly well signposted; a car also lets you reach spots local buses don't serve. If you intend to visit the Akamas Peninsula or drive off-road in the Troodos, you will need a four-wheel-drive as the dirt tracks are too much for a standard rental car. In the height of summer—June to September—a car with air conditioning is strongly recommended as the heat of the day is intense.

Jeep safari in the Troodos.

Rule #2: Time your visit

June to September is the busiest and the hottest period. If you want to see the almond blossom, come in February. May is my favourite month; it's hot enough to swim in the sea but the island is still green from winter rains and the fields are scarlet with poppies. In October, you'll miss the summer crowds but still enjoy beach weather—and the Mediterranean should be warm enough for swimming. For golf, hiking and cycling, November and March are usually warm and clear.

Rule #3: Slow down to Cypriot time

Cyprus has a hot climate and trying to pack too much in is exhausting.





Take in the beautiful countryside.

Build in coffee stops, lunch stops and swimming stops to make the heat more enjoyable. Take a siesta or beach break after lunch when some shops close. Accept the fact that things happen slower here and stopping to chat in a shop or restaurant is part of daily life.

Rule #4: Don't be put off by long distances

Nothing is more than 2 to 3 hours apart in Cyprus and the highways are rarely busy. Mountain roads are much slower and signposting in rural areas can be muddled—and is sometimes only in Greek—so a good map is essential (the tourist board maps are helpful and free but sometimes inaccurate). If you have time, take the coast roads instead of the highway, for example, from Paphos to Limassol or Limassol to Larnaca. They're empty and there are some tantalising views of the coastline.

Rule #5: Use all your senses

Don't just blast through Cyprus with

your air conditioning on; away from the busy coastal resorts, enjoy the full sensory experience. Pull off the road to look at the view from look-out points, turn off the engine and listen to the silence. Park outside villages and walk through them rather than driving, stopping for wine-tasting or coffee and a chat with the locals. Wherever you are in the hills, smell the wild herbs and listen to the sound of the wind in the pines.

Rule #6: Mix & match accommodation

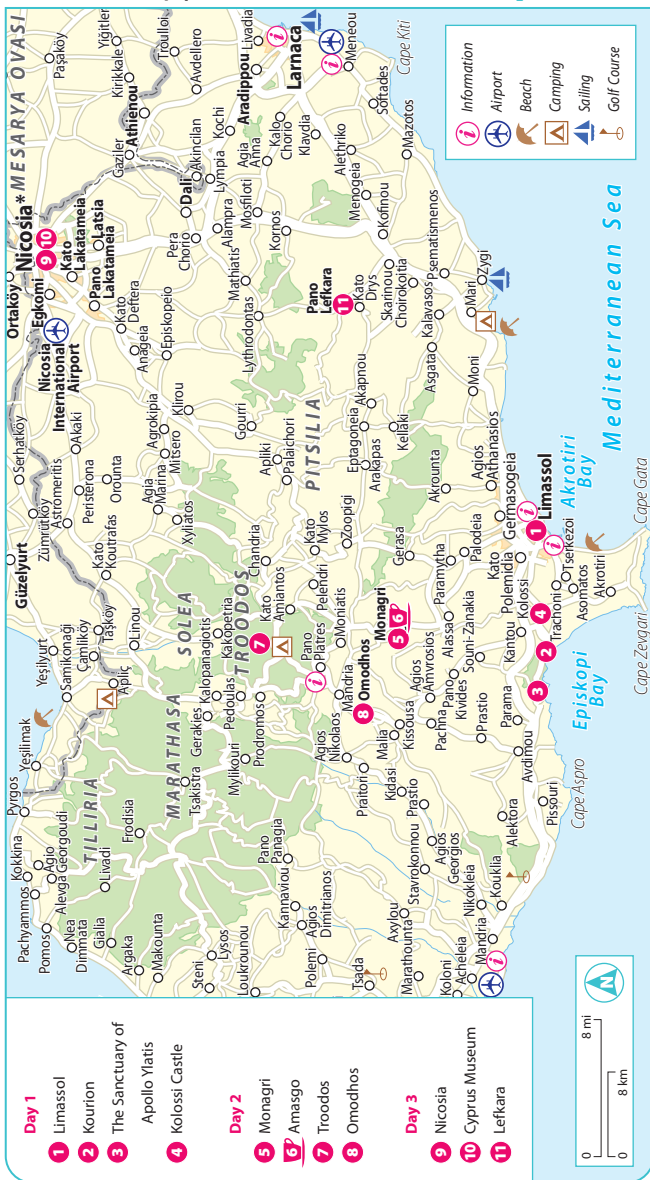
Cyprus has some of the finest luxury resorts in the Mediterranean as well as a wide range of rural, stone-built houses that can be rented as part of the government's agrotourism initiative (www.agrotourism.com.cy). Splash out on a golf and spa resort one day and stay in a mountain village the next. Vary where you eat, too; in the resorts, there are some excellent international restaurants as a break from the delicious but ubiquitous meze. ●

2

The Best **Full-Day Tours**



South Cyprus in Three Days



With a car in Cyprus, you can cover plenty of ground in a long weekend, taking in the antiquities around Limassol, the pine-scented Troodos Mountains, the wine-growing districts and the capital, Nicosia. Your own transport gives you the freedom to explore some of the island's most rugged mountain scenery and hilltop monasteries—and the quietest, most remote beaches will also be in reach. **START: Limassol. Trip length: 241km (150 miles). Three days.**

Day One

1 ★★★ Limassol. Limassol (Lemessos in Greek) was built between two ancient sites, Amathous to the east and Kourion to the west. Today, it's a sprawling, commercial city with an historic centre just inland from the Old Port. Get a glimpse of Limassol in the Middle Ages by visiting **Limassol Castle** at the centre of the town; its origins date back to 1228 and it was used as a prison until the 1950s. There's a small **Medieval Museum** in the castle containing artefacts from the early Christian era to Byzantine times. The complex is surrounded by outdoor bars, coffee shops for a break after the visit, and there are some good new-age souvenir shops in the alleys around the square selling olive oil products, candles and clothing. *See p 72.*

From Limassol, take the old road, the B6, towards Paphos and follow the signs to Kourion. Distance: 18km (11 miles).

2 ★★★ kids Kourion is the most impressive archaeological site on the island, spread out high on a cliff-top. The structures you can see today are from the 2nd century B.C.

and later. Although the site is still being excavated, you can wander round the collection of villas with their intricate and exceptionally well-preserved mosaics and visit the vast amphitheatre, used for performances every summer. *See p 71.*

3 ★ The Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis, which dates from the 8th century B.C. through the Hellenistic period to the Roman period, is 3km (2 miles) from Kourion, while the entrance ticket also covers the just-discernible remains of a vast stadium that would have seated 6,000, also dating to the 2nd century A.D. *See p 74.*

4 Just 15 minutes by car from here is **★★ kids Kolossi Castle**, more of a fortified tower than a 'real' castle, and one of the last reminders of the occupation of the island by the Knights Hospitaller. Drive back to Limassol and take an evening stroll along the waterfront before dining in one of the busy, informal Mediterranean restaurants clustered around **Limassol Castle**, which is floodlit after dark. 🕒 **1 day. Limassol Tourist Information, ☎ 25 262 756. For a full tour of Limassol, see p 72.**

Well-preserved mosaics at Kourion.



Day Two

From Limassol, take the B8 to the Troodos Mountains, following signs for Troodos. Distance: 44km (27 miles).

5 ★ Monagri. Stop after 13km (8 miles) at the viewpoint signposted from Alassa; there are sweeping views of the lake created by the Kouris Dam as you begin to climb into the mountains. After another 7km (4½ miles) or so, turn left to Monagri, a tiny village with typical architecture of the region: cobbled streets, solid, whitewashed houses, terracotta tiled roofs and huge clusters of pots overflowing with scarlet geraniums. The village is surrounded by vineyards and orchards. Opposite **Amasgo** (below) is a squat little church, starkly white-washed on the outside and rich with icons and gold on the interior.

6P ★ Amasgo. A small winery where you can taste and buy local produce. ☎ 25 360 612. \$.

7 ★★★ kids Troodos. Carry on climbing up to Troodos, through vineyards and eventually pine forest. In the town you can join one of

the many **hiking trails**, long and short, radiating out from the mountain top, from where you'll see right across the section of the island occupied by Turkey. There are supermarkets and market stalls to pick up supplies for a picnic; alternatively, try the fresh mountain trout at **Psilo Dentro**, a trout farm with a barbecue at the foot of the Caledonia Hiking Trail. 🕒 ½ day. ☎ 25 813 131. For full details of Troodos walking trails, see p 48.

From Troodos, drive through **Platres and Mandria to Omodhos**. Distance: 20km (12 miles).

8 ★★ Omodhos. Omodhos is the epicentre of the island's wine production. It's really a small town rather than a village with far-reaching views across the surrounding hills and vineyards, the old cobbled centre lined with shops selling lace, mountain honey and wine. The tavernas are welcoming and of a high standard (slow-cooked stews and meat dishes are especially good in the mountains). At the end of the main, pedestrianised street is the **Monastery of the Holy Cross** (p 36, **4**). Spend the night in one of the small agrotourism establishments here. 🕒 ½ day.

The tiny village church in Monagri.





A local woman embroiders lace outside a Lefkara craft shop.

Day Three

From Omodhos, drive down the E601 back to the coast, stopping wherever there's a good view. Take the A1 motorway all the way to Nicosia. Distance: 115km (72 miles).

9 ★★ Nicosia. Head straight for the old, walled part of the city (signposted 'centre') and park on the ramparts. Old Nicosia is easy to explore and on foot is the only way (for full details of a walking tour through the city see p 81, **2**). After your walk, stop in **Laiki Yitonia** for a much-deserved rest. In this cluster of alleyways, tavernas and restaurants nestle in vine-covered courtyards in front of old houses. In between the many souvenir stores there are craft workshops and some small galleries. The shady terraces, the quiet bustle and a fine assortment of meze dishes make this an ideal lunch stop. ⌚ ½ day. **Nicosia Tourist Information.** ☎ 22 674 264.

10 ★★ Cyprus Museum. Nicosia's principal museum houses an impressive collection of artefacts from prehistoric Cyprus to the early Christian period. A highlight is the Aphrodite of Soloi statue, the face of which appeared on the old Cyprus pound

banknotes and is still an emblem for the island. There's also an impressive set of terracotta figures from Agia Irini in the north, believed to date back to the 6th or 7th century B.C. You'll also see intricate gold jewellery and a display of the island's mining heritage.

⌚ 2 hr. See p 84.

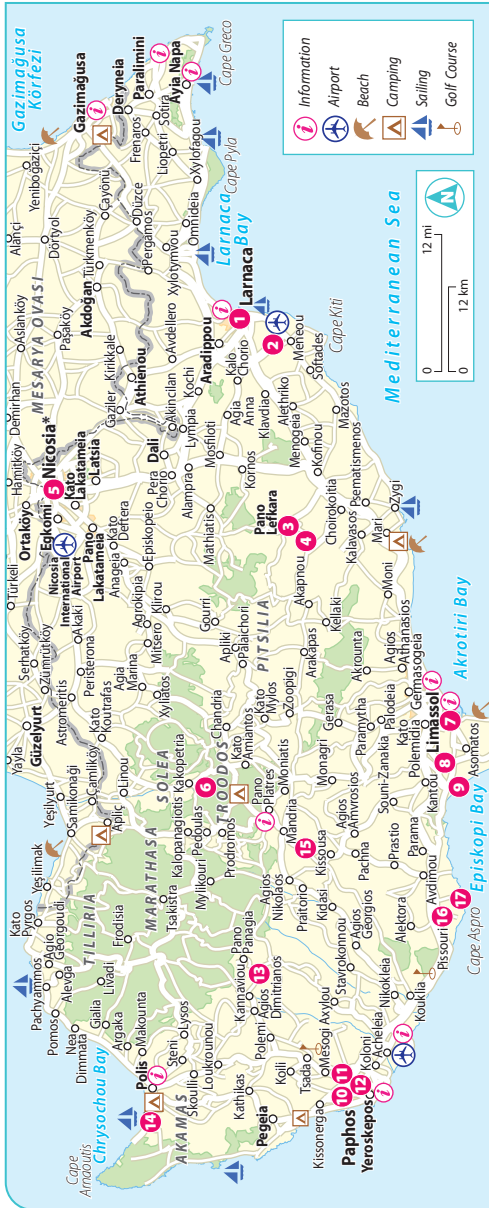
From Nicosia, take the A1 motorway to the junction with the A5. Turn towards Limassol and leave at the first exit, the E105 to Lefkara. Distance: 46km (28 miles).

11 ★ Lefkara. Lefkara village is everything you'd imagine a Cypriot village would be, from the terracotta rooftops to the flower-filled courtyards, all with commanding views over the surrounding, scrub-covered hills. Wizen old ladies in black sit outside their shops, embroidering intricate lace table cloths and every other shop sells lace made in the village. A lot of filigree silverware is made here, too. Spend the night here, or in Larnaca, or book an agrotourism room in a private house in the nearby villages of **Tochni** or **Choirokoitia**; www.cyprusvillages.com has a wide selection. ⌚ 2 hr. See p 55.

Lace umbrellas in the large village of Omodhos.



South Cyprus in One Week



- Day 1**
 - 1 Larnaca
 - 2 Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque
 - 3 Lefkara
 - 4 Hill villages
 - Day 2**
 - 5 Nicosia
 - Day 3**
 - 6 Troodos
 - Day 4**
 - 7 Limassol
 - 8 Kolossi Castle
 - 9 Kourion
 - Day 5**
 - 10 Paphos
 - 11 Paphos Antiquities
 - 12 Tombs of the Kings
 - Day 6**
 - 13 Chrysorrogiatissa Monastery
 - 14 Latsi
 - 15 Omodhos
 - 16 Pissouri
 - Day 7**
 - 17 Pissouri Beach

A week on the island gives enough time to combine the most important antiquities with some leisurely drives through the mountains, visiting wine-growing villages and nature reserves. Allow plenty of time for impromptu stops in small villages for coffee, walks and admiring the many uninterrupted views of hills, vineyards and forest. **START: Larnaca. Trip length: 591km (367 miles). Seven days.**

Day One

1 ★ Larnaca. Park on one of the side streets as close to the waterfront as possible and take in the scene for a while: the broad, pedestrianised sweep of Finikoudes promenade, lined with cafes and tavernas, giving way to 800m (2,625 ft.) of sandy beach, Larnaca's playground. The fort at the western end was built as a castle by the Lusignans and adapted by the Turks in 1625 to defend the Turkish harbour; today, it houses a small Medieval Museum (p 70, **5**).

Between the fort and Ayios Lazarus Church, a couple of blocks inland you'll find the old Turkish quarter, complete with mosques, narrow alleys and artisans' workshops. Take a look at Ayios Lazarus itself; the original dates back to the 9th century, when the remains of the man Jesus is believed to have raised from the dead were found on the island. The church was subsequently built in his honour in the 17th century and is known for its elaborate icons, including one of

Lazarus emerging from his tomb after resurrection, and the intricate wood carvings, notably the throne and reliquary. ⌚ ½ day. See p 68.

Drive out of town on the B4 and follow the signs once you've passed the airport turnoff for Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque.

2 Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque.

This lonely structure overlooks Larnaca's vast salt lake, which will be bright pink with flamingos if you're visiting in winter, an arid dust bowl if you're here in summer. The mosque (p 69, **8**) was built in honour of the aunt of the Prophet Mohammed, marking the spot where she died, and is considered one of the holiest sites in the Muslim world. ⌚ 30 min.

Rejoin the B4 and take the A3 motorway signposted to Nicosia for 6km (4 miles), then the A5 signposted to Limassol for 24km (15 miles) to the Lefkara turnoff.

Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque, Larnaca.



Follow the E105 for 8km (5 miles) to Pano Lefkara and park the car.

3 ★ Lefkara. Lefkara is a traditional Cypriot hill village, containing a cluster of whitewashed houses with terracotta roof tiles proudly displaying window boxes bursting with scarlet geraniums. The village is famed for its lace-making and filigree silver workshops and this is a good place to buy lace and silver. 🕒 **2 hr.**

From Lefkara, drive across country to the tiny hamlets of Kato Drys and Vavla.

4 ★★ Hill villages. Just after Kato Drys is another small hamlet where the village women make lace. Stop at **Agios Minos**, a little 15th-century monastery where the nuns paint icons and make honey for sale. Now make your way down the F112 to **Choirokoitia** and take a quick break to visit the Neolithic settlement site, right on the main road. Some of the curious circular compounds have been recreated to show how Stone Age man lived while others are only just discernible, perched on a hillside (p 29, **4**).

Back in Larnaca, have dinner on the waterfront in one of the long line of seafood tavernas and enjoy the buzz of the beach and promenade after dark, as locals take an evening stroll, sit in the al fresco bars and greet friends. 🕒 **2 hr. See p 68.**

Larnaca to Nicosia is an easy drive on the A2 and then the A1 motorways (about 50km/30 miles). In Nicosia, follow the signs to the centre, pass through the walls and park by the mosque on Constanza bastion in the public car park.

Day Two

5 ★★★ Nicosia. Spend the morning walking around the old city, taking in Ledra Street and the crossing point to the Turkish-occupied north.



Recreated Stone Age houses, Choirokoitia.

Even if you don't cross (take a passport if you want to go), the concept of being in 'the world's last divided capital' is fascinating. There's a small exhibit on the Greek side showing press cuttings from 1974 at the time of the Turkish invasion.

In a morning, you can walk the old city, taking in the Makarios Cultural Centre including its art galleries and Byzantine Museum and the Cathedral of St John with its 18th-century frescoes and richly painted icons (see p 35, **1** for a detailed tour of the old city). Finish at **Laiki Yitonia**, a series of alleys just inside the walls filled with souvenir shops, craft workshops and tavernas promising cool beers and slow meze in their vine-covered courtyards.

After lunch, walk westwards along the walls and exit via Plateau Dion Solomou, carrying on west along the base of the walls to the Cyprus Archaeological Museum and the leafy Municipal Gardens. This is the island's most comprehensive collection of art, icons, artefacts and sculpture and is worth a good couple of hours before returning to the car and driving back to Larnaca for a swim and a relaxing evening.

🕒 **1 day. Nicosia Tourist Information.** ☎ **22 674 264.**

Drive from Larnaca to Limassol (67km/42 miles) staying on the A1 motorway past Limassol centre. Turn off on the B8 signposted Troodos. Distance: 44km (27 miles).

Day Three

6 ★★★ kids Troodos. This is a day pottering around the Troodos Mountains, stopping when a view of the hills and vineyards catches your eye or a village taverna beckons (try walking past the smell of grilling souvlaki at lunchtime without resisting). Some of my favourite spots on this drive, starting from the turnoff onto the B8, include the tiny village of Alassa and the views over the Kouris Dam. I love Monagri, the gardens of its whitewashed houses crammed with fruit trees, chickens, bee hives and somewhat random vegetable plots, as well as old wine-making equipment. Troodos itself offers several **hiking trails** of varying length, radiating out from the mountain top. On the way down to Limassol, take a diversion on the E803 to Vouni, a large, sprawling village tucked into a natural bowl on the hillside. Just below the town, clearly signposted along a dirt track, is the British-run **Vouni Donkey Sanctuary**, a charity and home to some 120 retired or unwanted donkeys, once vital transport on Cyprus and still used, albeit in diminished numbers.

Carry on towards the coast and join the E601 to Episkopi and then the A1 to your hotel in Limassol.



Visit the charity-run donkey sanctuary near Vouni.

I'd suggest a night out in Limassol in Stretto or Karatelo, two restaurants beside the old castle, which is atmospherically floodlit at night. ⌚ **1 day. Troodos Tourist Information in Platres.** ☎ 25 421 316. *For restaurants in Limassol, see p 79. For full details of Troodos walking trails, see p 48.*

Day Four

7 ★★★ Limassol. Revisit Limassol centre by daylight and explore the castle and its small Medieval

Wander the shops, tavernas and craft workshops in Laiki Yitonia.



Museum (p 76, 4), taking time afterwards to stroll through the alleyways leading off the castle square; don't miss the unassuming Limassol Turkish Baths on Loutron (p 76, 5), the oldest building in town, dating back to Byzantine times. **Limassol Tourist Information**, ☎ 25 262 756.

From Limassol, take the old road, the B6, towards Paphos and follow the signs to Kolossi Castle. Distance: 16km (10 miles).

8 ★★ **kids Kolossi Castle**, more of a fortified tower than a 'real' castle, is one of the last reminders of the occupation of the island by the Knights Hospitaller (p 74, 2). ⌚ 1 hr.

Continue from here 2km (1 mile) or so towards Paphos on the B6 to Kourion.

9 ★★★ **Kourion** is one of the most significant archaeological sites on the island, a collection of a huge Greco-Roman amphitheatre and a series of Roman villas with mosaics that are impressively intact. Nearby, the somewhat neglected **Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis** and remains of a

Kolossi Castle, a reminder of the occupation by the Knights Hospitaller.



vast stadium that would have seated 6,000, also dating to the 2nd century A.D. Both places have the ability to conjure up evocative images, from Roman daily life to infamous gladiatorial contests. ⌚ 2 hr.

Take the B6 and then the A1 motorway from Kourion to Paphos. Distance: 53km (33 miles).

Day Five

10 ★★★ **kids Paphos**. If you have time, stay longer on the B6 rather than taking the fast road. It passes straight through the British army base at Episkopi and the manicured green of Happy Valley, British army territory, complete with cricket pitch. After Pissouri, the road hugs the coast, winding along steep cliffs to the dramatic Petra tou Romiou, the birthplace of Aphrodite, goddess of love. There are parking places all along the cliff, from where you can see the mighty chunk of white limestone that's broken away from the mainland, rising out of the aquamarine sea. Just past the rock, there's a shortcut back to the motorway for the remainder of the journey. ⌚ 1½ hr.

11 **Paphos Antiquities**. Paphos has a rich archaeological heritage, having enjoyed the glory of being the political and cultural capital of the island from 400 B.C. to A.D. 400, when a massive earthquake put an abrupt end to its rule. Today, the excavations, which cover a seafront stretch immediately north of Kato Paphos town centre, come under the umbrella of the Paphos Archaeological Park and have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Highlights include the Paphos Mosaics, contained in four houses and rich in colour and symbolism of the day, and nearby, the Odeion, an ancient amphitheatre, the stones worn smooth over the centuries.

⌚ 2 hr.



The Tombs of the Kings, burial sites of local dignitaries from A.D. 400.

12 ★★ ★ **kids** **Tombs of the Kings.** Part of the same Paphos Archaeological Park, the Tombs of the Kings date from the latter years of Paphos's reign, A.D. 400, and are the subterranean burial sites of local nobles and dignitaries (see p 86 for more detail on Paphos). 🕒 1 hr.

End a busy day's sightseeing with drinks around the busy harbour, lined with souvenir shops and cafes and guarded by the remnants of a 13th-century fortress. **Paphos Tourist Information.** ☎ 26 930 521.

Day Six

Drive north from Paphos on the B7 and just before the village of Stroumpi, turn onto the E703 towards Polemi. Follow the signs to Pano Panageia and in the village, take the F622 to the monastery (about 50km/30 miles).

13 ★ **Chrysorogiatissa Monastery.** The two main reasons I love this monastery are the wine and the view across the pines of the Paphos forest in one direction and the whole of the west of the island in another. A monastery dedicated to Our Lady of the Golden

Pomegranate has been here since 1152, when it was built to accommodate an icon of the Virgin Mary believed to have been painted by St Luke. The icon is kept nowadays in a special casket. The monastery's winery, producing fine reds, whites and rosés for sale using entirely natural methods, is in the cloisters and is open to visitors. 🕒 2 hr. ☎ 26 722 455. *Open Mon–Fri.*

Follow the E703 back to the B7 and carry on north through Polis and along the coast to Latsi (about 37km/23 miles).

14 ★ **kids** **Latsi.** This growing fishing village is still extremely laid-back compared to Paphos, and has a string of tavernas along the beach, all specialising in fish. It's a peaceful place to stop for lunch with views across Chrysohou Bay towards Akamas. If you prefer a picnic, stock up in the village (be here before about 12:30pm when shops close for lunch) and follow the B7 (F735 on some maps) until it ends in Neo Chorio, little more than a cluster of stone houses along a couple of narrow streets on the edge of the Akamas Forest. The road becomes a

Smigies picnic site in the shade of ancient pines.





The village of Omodhos, surrounded by vineyards.

dirt track here but it's just about passable for a regular, three-door rental car. Park at the **Smigies picnic site**, in the shade of tall, ancient pines. Walk off lunch on one of two easy trails, a 2.5km (1.5 miles) or a 5km (3 miles) option, clearly marked, through dense forest with occasional flashes of dazzling blue sea through the trees. The B7 will take you all the way back to Paphos afterwards.

Take the A1 from Paphos to Avdimou and the F606 into the hills, following signs to Omodhos.

15 ★★ Omodhos. Omodhos is a busy and important wine-growing village, surrounded by vineyards snaking over rolling hills (p 12, **8**). Visit the Monastery of the Holy Cross, taste some of the wines (the wineries have outlets in the village) and have lunch here before heading back to Avdimou and taking the old

B6 coast road to Pissouri. If you haven't yet seen the Rock of Aphrodite, head down to the site at sunset, when the white rock glows a soft pink.

16 ★ Pissouri. Have dinner in Pissouri village, a country town clinging dramatically to a steep hillside overlooking the coast; there's a cluster of particularly good tavernas in the main square here; I like **Pissouri Square Taverna**, which has game dishes and slow-cooked stews as well as grilled meat cooked over charcoal. ☎ 25 221 579.

Day Seven

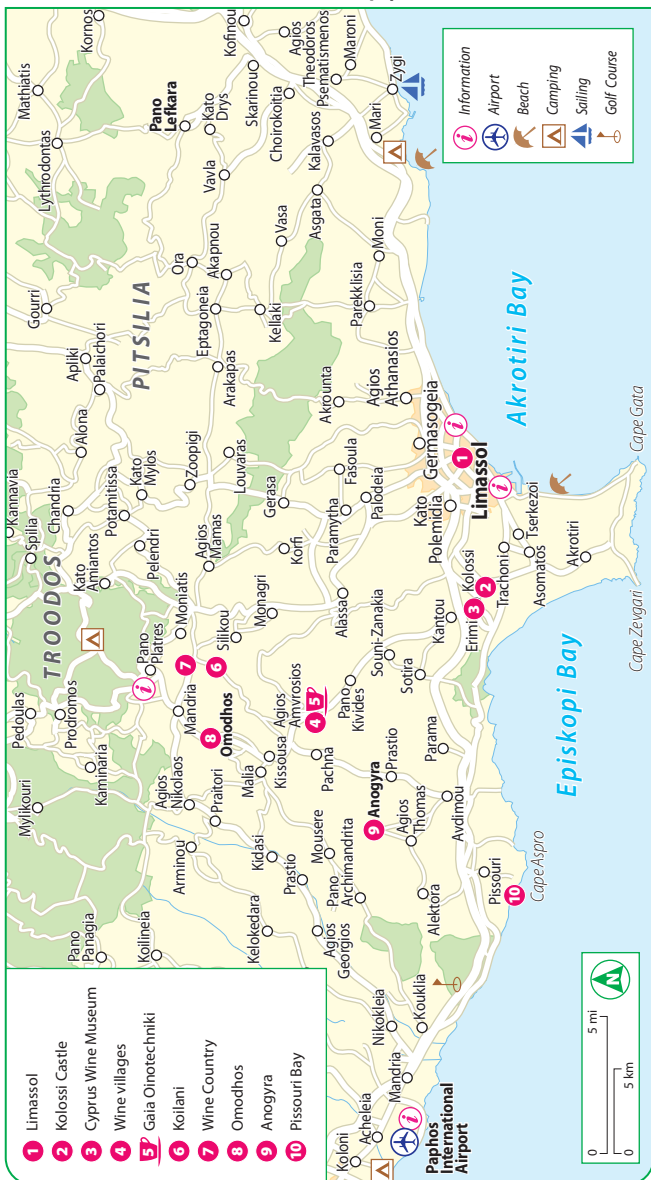
17 Pissouri Beach. For the final day of this tour, relax on Pissouri Beach, stony and peaceful, until it's time to take the A1 and then A5 motorways back to Larnaca airport—less than 2 hours' drive. ●

3

The Best **Special-Interest** Tours



Food & Wine in Cyprus



Previous page: Coral Beach.

A blend of Greek dishes with Middle Eastern and Mediterranean influences, Cypriot food is delicious. Even in the most basic taverna, food is fresh, often organic, and slow cooked with herbs, spices and home-grown olive oil. The island has a 2,000-year history of vine cultivation and produces some fine wines, which you can buy direct along the route of this tour. Take your time exploring.

START: Limassol. Trip length: 3 days.

1 ★★★ Limassol. Start your tour with a night in Limassol to try one of the excellent restaurants in the city centre. My favourite is Ta Piatakia, ('Little Plates' in Greek), run by South African-born Roddy Damalis (☎ 25 745 017). Choose any number of tiny dishes from prawns in peri-peri sauce to mushrooms in Commandaria wine and rosemary. Roddy also runs cookery classes, including a trip to the local market, lessons in the use of Cypriot herbs and preparation of traditional dishes with a contemporary twist. Enquire well in advance about these. *See p 72.*

Leave Limassol and call at Kolossi Castle, 13km (8 miles) out of town on the B6.

2 ★★ kids Kolossi Castle. Now a ruin, the castle was once a Commandary of the Knights Hospitaller and it's from here that Commandaria originated, the sweet dessert wine loved by Cypriots. *See p 74,*

2 for more information on Kolossi.

Drive west 2km (1 mile) to Erimi village.

3 ★★ Cyprus Wine Museum. This easy-to-navigate museum will give you a comprehensive overview of the island's wines. The entrance fee includes two tastings. *See p 75, 3.*

Drive north 14km (9 miles) on the E601 to Ayios Amvrosios.

4 ★★★ Wine villages. You'll see orange and brown road signs bearing a number four from here onwards, as you're following Route



Sign for Cyprus wine routes.

4 of the newly-launched **Cyprus Wine Routes.**

5 ★★★ Gaia Oinotechniki. Just past Ayios Amvrosios village, the winery is worth a stop to sample the organic red and rosé wines. ☎ 25 943 98. \$-\$\$\$.

Travel Tip

For ideas for an overnight, try Lofou, 9km (5½ miles) or so across the hills from here, a village with carefully restored stone houses and a clutch of excellent tavernas. Three, Kamares, Kazani and Lofou, have been awarded Vakhis certificates, a standard set by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation for establishments offering authentic, traditional,

home-cooked food. On my visit, the scents of jasmine, pine, wild herbs and grilled souvlaki mingled in the air: irresistible.

Take the E803 to the right towards Vouni. Pass Vouni and continue to Koilani.

6 Koilani. Koilani is a bustling little village with well-preserved stone houses and shady squares. There are some good wineries here: Agia Mavri (☎ 25 470 225) produces Mosxatos, a subtle dessert wine with a fistful of international awards, while Vardalis Kilani (just beyond the village, ☎ 25 470 261) makes some decent reds. While in the village, look out for the delicacies of *palouze* and *soudjoukos*, both based on grapes. *Palouze* is a jelly-like dessert made with grape juice and flavoured with rose or orange water, while *soudjoukos* is a chewy candy with almonds to add crunch. Both are produced here.

Continue north through Pera Pedi to Mandria; don't follow the orange wine route signs at this point.

7 ★★ Wine Country. By now you're deep in wine country, surrounded by steep hills, olive and

Lemon groves can also be found in the wine country.



lemon groves, and almond and apple orchards. A lot of villagers are involved in agricultural production; look out for old olive presses and wine barrels dotted around people's gardens. The big terracotta jars, pitharia, date back 100 years and more to when families made their own wine and used it for marinating pork and sausages to preserve them. In Pera Pedi, the winery produces orange and coffee liqueurs as well as table wines; book a visit on ☎ 99 681 431. The winery in Mandria, M. Antoniadis (☎ 25 384 121) has a fascinating display of ancient wine-making equipment and a tasting room with a spacious terrace from which you can see miles of undulating hills dotted with little villages, while sampling the red and white Castellani wines.

Just outside Mandria you'll see fields of lavender and other herbs; this is the Castellano Herb Farm (☎ 25 433 961) where herbal teas and other potions are for sale.

8 ★★ Omodhos. The principal town in Limassol's wine-growing district, Omodhos is surrounded by wineries and has a bustling, pedestrianised centre with many tavernas, wine shops and a majestic monastery, **Timios Stavros** (see p 36, **4** for details on Omodhos). There are a couple of boutique hotels (Stou kir Yianni is just three suites in an old stone house with taverna, ☎ 25 422 100, www.omodosvillagecottage.com) and some distinctive places to eat with vine-covered terraces. The Taverna Ambolethea at the entrance to the village (☎ 25 421 366) is particularly friendly and serves slow-cooked meat dishes and wine from the owner's vineyard.

From Omodhos, head back towards the coast via the F604, the E601 and the F608 to Anogyra.

9 ★ kids Anogyra. Vineyards are giving way to scrubby hillsides



The majestic monastery Timios Stavros.

populated by huge herds of goats by now, as well as carob trees lining the winding road; look for the long, dangling seed pods. But before you enter carob country proper, follow the signs to the Oleastro Olive Park. The bumpy track off the Anogyra road looks impassable but it's just manageable in a small rental car. For information on the park, see p 40, **6**. Have lunch at the organic buffet here; on my visit, they were offering goat that had been cooked for 6 hours and simply fell off the bone, as well as meatballs in spicy tomato sauce and herby vegetarian pasta.

After Oleastro, park in Anogyra village, another sleepy spot where the air shimmers on a hot day and old men lounge in the shade outside the coffee shop, playing backgammon. There's a small carob museum here where you can see the sticky pastelli carob candies being made and sample the goods; I love their crumbly carob cookies. A lot of families in the village are involved in the carob business and between September and May, in the cooler months, you'll be able to smell the sweet aroma of pastelli ingredients being simmered in huge pots over a fire. If there's nobody in the museum, knock on the door or ask around the village.

Drive to Avdimou on the F608 and join the B6 heading west until the Pissouri Bay turnoff.

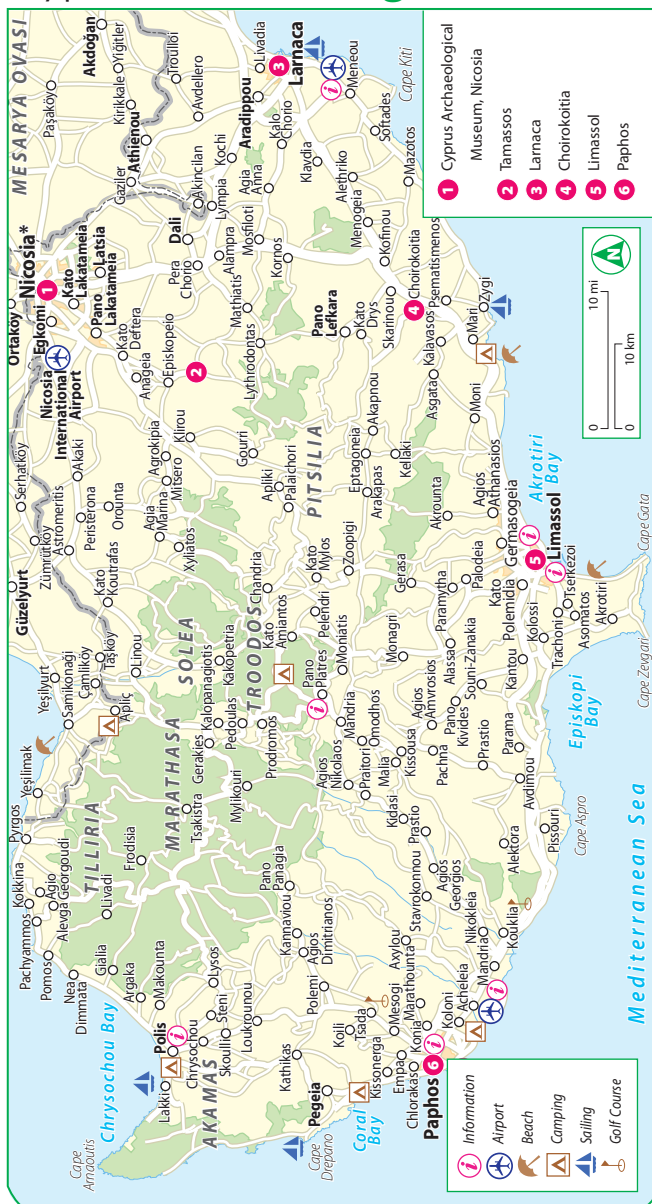
10 ★★ Pissouri Bay. Finish the food and wine tour at Pissouri Bay with a meal at Limanaki, right by the beach, where the chefs combine Lebanese, Cypriot, Indian and French influences. There are some imaginative and spicy vegetarian dips, wraps and curries, too, making it ideal for any taste and for lunch or dinner.

25 221 288. www.limanakipissouri.com. Book ahead at least 2 days.

Traditional oven at Oleastro Olive Park in Anogyra.



Cypriot Archaeological Sites



Cyprus has well-preserved and important archaeological sites telling the story of its past from Neolithic times to the Middle Ages and beyond. It offers the enthusiast enough to see for several days and has some fine museums completing the picture. Many of the digs are works in progress and some sites are small with little visible to the layperson. But a little study before visiting will help you piece together the island's architectural history, much of which is related to the pre-Christian cult of Aphrodite. **START: Nicosia. Trip length: 4 days.**

1 ★ Cyprus Archaeological Museum, Nicosia. Start your tour in the Cypriot capital, which has the biggest collection of archaeological finds on the island, spanning millennia from 7000 B.C. to the 7th century A.D. Highlights include the impressive display of terracotta figures found at the Agia Irini Sanctuary in Morfou and a series of limestone lions and sphinxes which were only discovered in 1997 at Tamassos. The museum is a vital part in the jigsaw of the island's history and I recommend a visit before exploring any of the archaeological sites, as it pulls the whole story together. ⌚ 2 hr. For details, see p 84, **8**.



Horned God figurine in bronze from the Cyprus Archaeological Museum in Nicosia.

signposted to Pera and the site of Tamassos. Distance: 20km (12 miles).

2 ★ Tamassos. Some 20km (12 miles) south of Nicosia, where the arid plain begins to slope upwards into the foothills of the Troodos is the remains of the former city-kingdom of Tamassos. Mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*, Tamassos earned its wealth through its copper reserves which were exploited variously by Alexander the Great and King Herod the Great of Judea. Excavations only began in 1889, with exciting finds such as the stone lions and sphinxes now displayed in the Cyprus Archaeological Museum in Nicosia being

Leave the city to the south and join the E902,

Copper Mining

Copper was discovered in Cyprus in 3000 B.C. and was mined from then until the last century, bringing great wealth to the island. It was the island's copper sources that inspired the Romans to take possession of Cyprus in 58 B.C. and their mining equipment—ropes, baskets and wooden supports in underground shafts—was still being found in mines being worked as recently as the 20th century. Today, the copper mining industry is far smaller and activity fluctuates according to the world copper price, but there are still active mines on the island.

discovered as recently as 1997. Excavations are ongoing and so far include two underground tombs for royalty, a further 50 rock-cut tombs, a citadel, a temple to Aphrodite and the copper-processing site. The accessible areas are only small; you can go inside the royal tombs (note how the stone walls of the interiors have been carved to resemble wooden houses) and walk around the other sites but what's more interesting is that archaeologists believe there is a lot more of Tamasos to uncover. 🕒 30 min. ☎ 22 622 619. Admission 1.70€. Open daily 9:30am–3:30pm.

Continue south on the F902 until it joins the A1 motorway. Follow this to the A5 and drive to Larnaca. Distance: 59km (36 miles).

Travel Tip

You can buy a pass for 17.10€ that is valid for a week and allows entry into any museum or archaeological site controlled by the Department of Antiquities. Ask at the tourist office or buy one at the CTO desk at Larnaca airport.

3 ★★ Larnaca. Modern Larnaca has been built over the ancient site of Kition, constructed in the 13th century B.C. by Mycenaean Greeks. Although the small area of Kition that has been excavated is not particularly well preserved, it ties up well with a visit to the **Larnaca District Archaeological Museum**, which houses some items discovered at the site including Mycenaean ceramics, votive terracotta figurines and Roman glass. Going back further, the museum also displays tools and primitive jewellery from the prehistoric settlement at Choroikoitia, which is also part of this tour.

While in Larnaca, visit the 17th-century medieval fort on the waterfront at the western end of Finikoudes beach. The battlements and defensive walls are still intact, as are features like old wells and water fountains. For more on Kition, see p 70. 🕒 1hr. **Larnaca District Archaeological Museum, Plateia Kalograion.** ☎ 24 304 169. Open Sept–Jun Mon–Fri 9am–2:30pm, Thurs 3–5pm.

Leave Larnaca on the A5 motorway and drive west to

One of the island's oldest excavated settlements at Choroikoitia.



Choirokoitia, signposted from the A5. Distance: 32km (20 miles).

4 ★★ Kids Choirokoitia. One of the oldest excavated settlements on the island, the walled hillside village of Choirokoitia was home to some 2,000 inhabitants as far back as 6800 B.C. They lived in beehive-shaped huts, bred goats, cultivated the land and were skilled at spinning, weaving and pottery. Excavations have shown that the dead were buried under the houses, surrounded by gifts and their belongings. Much of what's been recovered is in the archaeological museum in Nicosia, including jewellery, vases, blades and figurines of fertility gods, but at the site you can see the walls of the circular houses and visit a couple of reconstructions.

 **30 min.** Open daily Nov–Feb 9am–5pm; Mar, Apr, Sept & Oct 9am–6pm; May–Aug 9am–7:30pm.

Carry on westwards to Limassol on the A5. 35km (22 miles).

5 ★★★ Limassol. Limassol has four archaeological sites, one at Amathous and three close together to the west of the city around Kourion, which is the richest and most significant. It's also the best preserved, with some exquisite mosaics and an acoustically impressive stone amphitheatre on the clifftop; try to attend a summer concert or ballet



The amphitheatre at Kourion hosts summer concert performances.

performance here, especially magical at sunset on a balmy night. **For details on Amathous, see p 77, 6.** **For details of Kourion, see p 73, 1.**

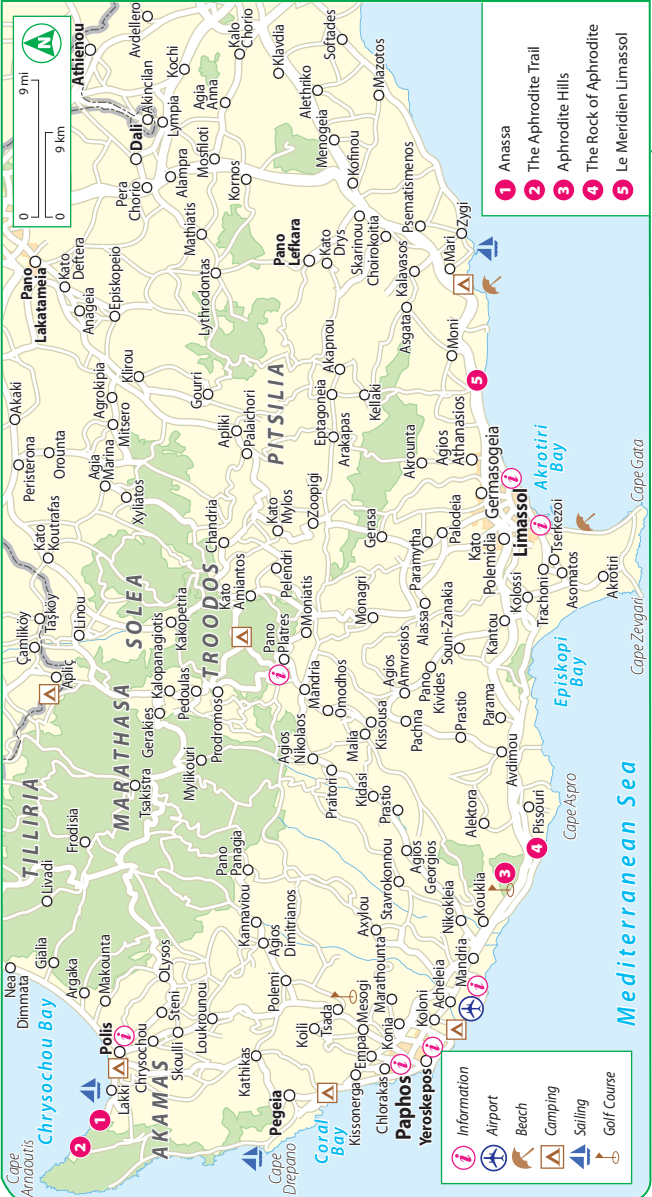
Follow the motorway west to Paphos. Distance: 69km (43 miles).

6 ★★★ Paphos. Another of ancient Cyprus's great city-kingdoms, Paphos is an important archaeological site, so much so that the whole of Kato Paphos around the harbour and Tombs of the Kings has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The antiquities date back to the 4th century B.C. and include the noblemen's tombs at the Tombs of the Kings and the excavation of four houses, their colourful mosaic floors remarkably intact, and an amphitheatre. **See p 86.**

Ongoing Digs in Cyprus

Many layers of history in ancient Cyprus have yet to be uncovered. A lot of the archaeological digs on the island are co-funded with overseas universities; some involve 'new' sites and others involve marine archaeology, as the west coast of the island is the location of a great number of wrecks. For detailed reports of each dig as and when it happens, visit the website of the Cypriot government's Department of Antiquities: http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/da/da.nsf/DMLsites_en/DMLsites_en?OpenDocument.

Best of Spas in Cyprus



Aphrodite, the mythological goddess of love, was born in Cyprus and beauty is a recurring theme on the island. In the modern era, Cyprus has fashioned itself as spa capital of the eastern Mediterranean, with many of the top hotels offering award-winning spas using treatments such as thalassotherapy, harnessing the healing powers of sea water. **START: Latchi (35km/22 miles north of Paphos). Trip length: 1 week.**

1 ★★★ kids Anassa. Start your Cypriot spa tour in the far northwest of the island at the Anassa Hotel, a five-star retreat on a wide, sandy beach outside Latchi, close to Akamas National Park. It's quiet here, away from the bustle of the resorts, and the combination of the spa treatments, the light, healthy Mediterranean cuisine and the calming setting is ideal for winding down at the beginning of a holiday. The Thalassa Spa at Anassa uses 100% natural products from London's The Organic Pharmacy—the only spa in the world to offer this pure, hypoallergenic line. There's a resident acupuncturist as well as experts in aromatherapy, shiatsu, reflexology, massage and nutrition. Swim in the sea from the hotel's beach, take walks on Akamas (the Cyprus Tourism Organisation provides maps of

marked trails) where you can skinny-dip from the rocks and breathe in the scent of wild herbs. I'd recommend at least 2 nights at Anassa to slow down and start to relax.

Anassa, Baths of Aphrodite Road.

☎ 26 888 000. www.thanoshotels.com. From 230€ per night.

Drive west from the hotel entrance on the E713 to the Baths of Aphrodite 5km (3 miles). Leave your car in the car park.

2 ★ kids The Aphrodite Trail.

The Baths of Aphrodite, just beyond the village of Latchi, 20 minutes' drive from Anassa, is a dappled, spring-fed rock pool in which the goddess would bathe with Adonis, her lover. It can get very busy at peak times but it's worth dropping in for a look as part of a longer day on Akamas. The pool marks the

The Myth of Aphrodite

Aphrodite's name comes from *aphros*, the Greek word for foam. According to legend, she emerged from the surf at Petra tou Romiou, an area of spectacular, craggy coastal scenery near Pissouri, and lived on the island. Aphrodite entertained many lovers and bore children with various other gods, despite being married to Hephaestus, the god of metalworking. The young Adonis was her favourite lover and the two used to frolic at the Baths of Aphrodite, a much-visited beauty spot north of the Akamas peninsula. Adonis was gored to death by a wild boar, possibly the jealous Hephaestus in disguise, while out hunting with Aphrodite. Where his blood fell, scarlet anemones grew.



Visit the Baths of Aphrodite and then embark on the trail along the coastline.

beginning of the 7.5km (4.8 miles) Aphrodite Trail, an easy walk with sweeping views of Cape Arnaoutis, an area of high cliffs, rocky islets and deep blue sea. *See p 52 for Akamas walks.*

Aphrodite Hills golf course.



Drive from Polis towards Paphos on the B7. Take the old coast road, the B6, from Paphos towards Pissouri and follow the signs to Aphrodite Hills, tucked in the hills overlooking the coast.

3 ★★ kids Aphrodite Hills.

Aphrodite Hills Resort is a contrast to Anassa in that it's a big golf and tennis complex with a five-star Inter-Continental Hotel, an independently run spa, a luxury villa development and several restaurants. Set high in the coastal hills, the resort is peaceful, cooled by sea breezes, with tantalising views of the Mediterranean beyond the green fairways of the golf course that surround the hotel. There's plenty for non-spa attending partners, including world-class golf on the 18-hole course and tennis, with lessons available. The Retreat Spa offers packages of 1, 2, 3 and 5 days as well as days for women, men and couples. There's also a large hammam, sauna and Greco-Roman-style *thermae* heat rooms where you can lounge for hours, as the Romans did, in a series of stone-floored rooms of varying temperature and humidity. The spa has its

own pool and sun deck and tranquil, leafy relaxation gardens which turn into an al fresco, candlelit restaurant, the Secret Garden, at night, serving meat and fish freshly cooked on hot stones. Stay at Aphrodite Hills for 3 nights and spend your time in the spa, trying different sports and at the hotel's beach club.

See p 91 for details of Aphrodite Hills.

Leave Aphrodite Hills and about 1km (½ mile) from the exit onto the B6, park at the Petra tou Romiou car park.

4 ★★ kids The Rock of Aphrodite. A huge chunk of limestone jutting out into the sea, the rock Petra tou Romiou marks the mythological spot where Aphrodite emerged from the surf. A lot of people come at sunset as the sun bounces off the white stone but I love it just as much in the early morning, when the rising sun illuminates the rock's eastern flank and the water is so glassy clear you can see individual rocks on the sea bed from the clifftop. The beach here is pebbly but comfortable enough to sit on. True romantics tie a strip of cloth to a nearby wishing tree, hoping for everlasting love. ⌚ 30 min. *unless you decide to swim.*

Either continue to Limassol along the coast road B6 or join the motorway, the A6. Drive straight past Limassol to the Amathous tourist area and leave the motorway. Le Meridien is the easternmost hotel on the strip.

5 ★★★ kids Le Meridien Limassol. What looks like a rather chunky, concrete resort hotel actually houses one of the largest and best-equipped spas on the island. I've suggested Le Meridien last because by now, you may be

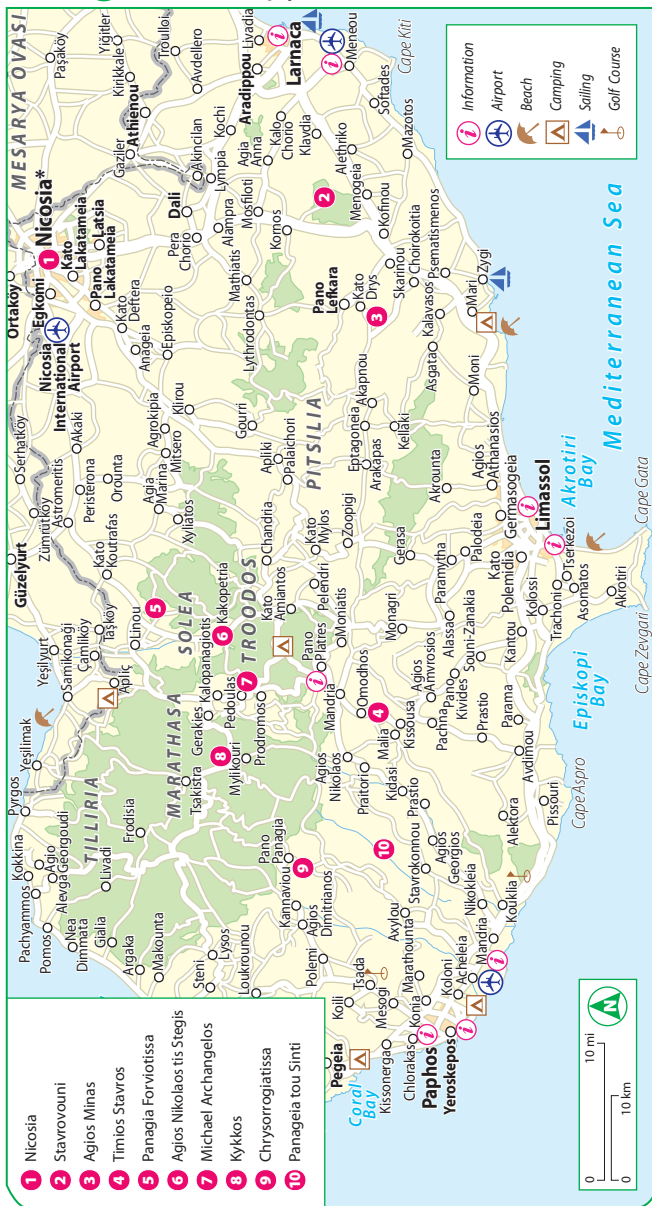


The mythological Rock of Aphrodite.

sufficiently relaxed to want to indulge in some sightseeing rather than stay in a retreat and Limassol has the most central location, as well as some sophisticated beach bars for sunset drinks and in the centre, a wide choice of Cypriot and international restaurants.

The hotel's Le Spa, the largest on the island, has won numerous international awards including the Professional Beauty Awards' 'World's Leading Spa' and specialises in thalassotherapy treatments using seawater. Wallow in four outdoor pools of varying salinity to heal muscular aches. There's also a huge indoor hydrotherapy pool and a 'sea oil' pool, which is a thick soup of concentrated seawater with minerals that have supposedly restorative powers. Other treatments include massage, wraps, floats and facials using Thalgo and Elemis products. *See p 78 for hotel details.*

Religion in Cyprus



Rich and powerful monasteries, their interiors dripping with gold and silver artefacts, nestle high in the pine-clad mountain tops of the Troodos. The hill villages, too, are scattered with a string of modest churches housing magnificent artworks. Tracking down these remote 'Painted Churches' of the Troodos involves some challenging driving, but the rewards are great.

START: Nicosia. Trip length: 3 days.

1 ★ Nicosia. The **Byzantine Art Museum** at the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation in the old city has a collection of some 220 icons, spanning the island's Christian history, and is a good precursor to touring the monasteries thanks to the overview it gives of their history and wealth. Nearby, Agios Ioannis (St John) is the island's most important cathedral, modest on the outside, lavishly carved and adorned in gold on the interior. 🕒 1 hr. See p 82, **4**.

Drive south from Nicosia for around 36km (22 ½ miles), looking for signs to Stavrovouni Monastery.

2 ★ Stavrovouni. Perched high on a rock outcrop in the foothills of the Troodos, this isolated monastery is said to have been founded in the

4th century by St Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, who was travelling with the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Helena was shipwrecked on Cyprus and part of the cross was left here and bequeathed to the monastery she had built. A fragment of the cross is believed to be kept in a silver reliquary which is still stored here. A community of 20 highly devout monks live in the monastery and only men are allowed to visit. 🕒 30 min. Open daily 8am–midday, 2–5pm.

Drive towards Lefkara village and take the mountain road to Agios Minas.

3 ★ Agios Minas. The nunnery of Agios Minas is only small, with graceful white-painted cloisters surrounding a 15th-century church, but

The Byzantine Art Museum is housed in the Makarios Cultural Centre.



Mountain Monasteries

All the important monasteries of Cyprus are inland. This is by design; Christianity had become established in Cyprus in the Byzantine period. The Lusignan rulers who took over the island in 1192 imposed Catholicism on the people, forcing Orthodox monks to flee to the mountains, where they built their monasteries in hidden locations, far from the coast. Luckily, the monasteries have flourished and the church today is fantastically wealthy. Many of the monasteries are open to the public. Getting inside the village churches may mean tracking down the key-holder in the *kafenion*—a great way to meet the locals.

sells some of the finest hand-painted icons on the island, as well as homemade honey. 🕒 30 min.

Open daily 9am–midday, 3–5pm.

Follow the road back down to the coast and drive 88km (55 miles) past Limassol to the Omodhos turnoff and up through the vineyards to Omodhos.

4 ★ Timios Stavros. Located at the end of the village's main cobbled street, the Monastery of the Holy Cross is another legacy of St Helena, who is said to have bequeathed a

Arches in the monastery of Timios Stavros, Omodhos.



piece of the bloodstained rope that bound Jesus to the cross. The monastery was built to accommodate the relic. The skull of the Apostle Philip and the remains of some 26 saints are also housed here. Since 1917, the riches have belonged to the people of Omodhos and Timios Stavros is actually now a parish church rather than a working monastery. 🕒 45 min. Open daily 9am–midday, 3–5pm.

Drive north on the B8 as far as Kato Koutrafas. Turn off here and drive until the minor road runs out at Panagia Forvriotissa. About 55km (34 miles).

5 ★ Panagia Forvriotissa. This squat, solid-looking stone building is one of the 10 UNESCO-protected Painted Churches of the Troodos, village churches that have been preserved for their important frescoes and paintings. They're a real contrast to the ostentatious wealth of the monasteries, many of them crumbling or covered with moss, the frescoes in need of renovation. This particular church, Our Lady of the Meadows, has a 12th-century nave and vibrant frescoes that date from between the 12th and 16th centuries. If it's closed, there will be a sign on the door indicating who in

Asinou village has the key. This is a long detour but the dense Adelfi forest next to the church has some cool, shady picnic spots. ⌚ 30 min.

Drive back to the B9 and head into the mountains through Kakopetria until you see the turnoff to Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis. About 21km (13 miles).

6 ★ Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis. En route to the next Painted Church, stop for a wander round Kakopetria, a mountain farming village straddling the hills either side of the Karyiotis River, complete with tumbledown stone houses and chickens scratching around. The Linos Inn (☎ 22 923 161, www.linostinn.com.cy) does a fine meze and also has rooms.

At the end of another winding road is the church, a chunky, barn-like building with a pitched roof to protect it from the winter snowfall. The frescoes date from the 11th to the 15th century and incorporate a variety of styles but the colours are deep and rich. ⌚ 30 min.

Follow the road west to Pedoulas, where the Michael Archangelos church is in the village centre. About 10km (6 miles).

7 ★ Michael Archangelos. You'll need a head for heights and a stomach for mountain roads but this is one of my favourite drives, across the top of the Troodos; wind down the windows, smell the pine-scented air, listen to the breeze in the trees and stop to look at the views of mountains and valleys, eventually arriving at Pedoulas. The 15th-century village church had a facelift in the 1980s and its frescoes as a result are particularly vibrant, depicting Old Testament and Gospel scenes. ⌚ 30 min.

Continue west 12km (7½ miles) to Kykkos.



Monastery of the Holy Cross, Kykkos.

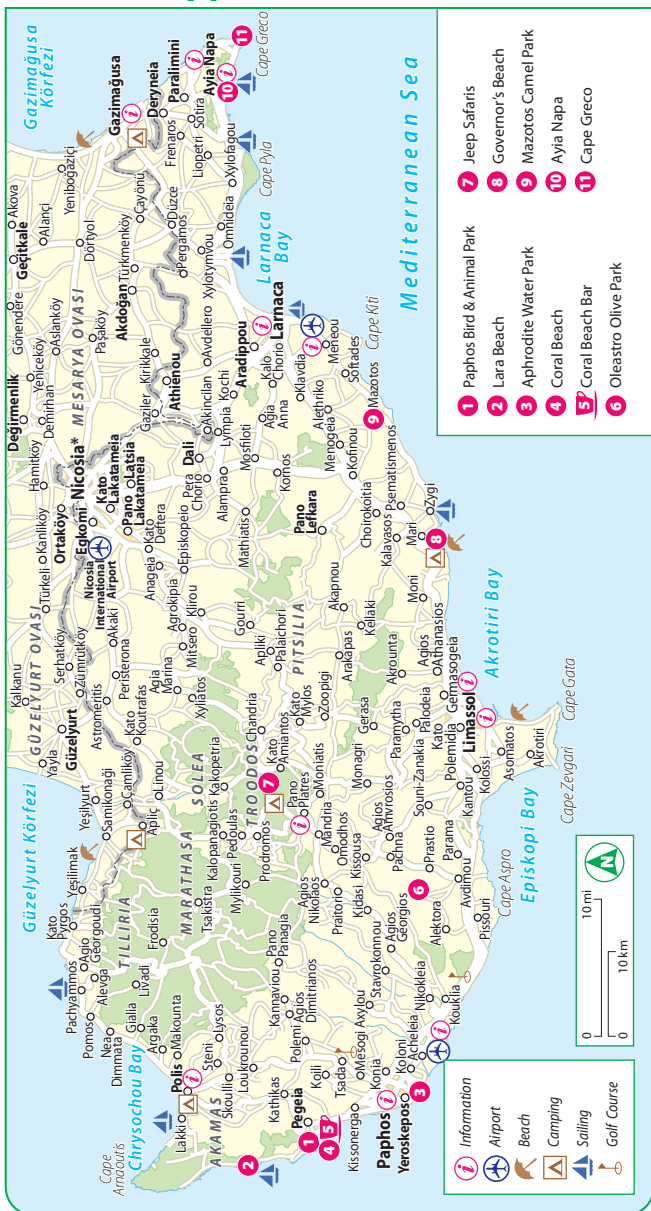
8 ★★★ kids Kykkos. Lavishly decorated, Kykkos is a jaw-dropping sight inside, absolutely festooned with gold. There's a museum here, too; allow a couple of hours to explore. ⌚ 2 hr. *Open daily Nov–May 10am–4pm; Jun–Oct 10am–6pm. Admission 2.57€ to the museum.*

Either cut across the mountains on the dirt tracks if you have a 4WD; or follow a 40km (25 miles) loop to the north and west on E and F roads.

9 ★★ Chrysorrogiatissa. Another magnificently wealthy monastery, Chrysorrogiatissa, which is located high in the hills above Paphos, has its own winery. ⌚ 1 hr. *See p 19, 13.*

10 ★ Panageia tou Sinti. Finish the tour with a more recently built monastery, the abandoned Panageia tou Sinti on the banks of the Potamos River. Considered by historians to be one of the most important Venetian structures on the island, the monastery has been elegantly restored by UNESCO. As it's empty, you can just turn up and look round. ⌚ 30 min.

Best of Cyprus for Families



Cypriots love children and welcome them everywhere.

Make your own entertainment, with walks in the mountains, long days on the beach, late afternoon visits to the antiquities, picnics and rustic restaurants by the sea, where the children can play in the sand. You'll never have to ask if an establishment is child-friendly—they all are. **START: Paphos. Trip length: 1 week.**

1 ★★ Paphos Bird & Animal Park. This compact zoo has a captive breeding programme and makes a good half day combined with a stop on nearby Coral Beach or Lara Beach. Go on a Wednesday afternoon, when children can interact with the park vets and watch them at work. Animals include snakes, iguanas, various species of deer and gazelle, giraffes and crocodiles. Birds, the park's real strength, are kept in decent enclosures and include hawks and eagles, ducks, geese and swans, game birds, ostrich, 64 types of parrot and nine types of cockatoo. ⌚ ½ day. *St George, Peya, 15km (9½ miles) from Paphos and 6km (4 miles) from Coral Bay.* ☎ 26 813 852. www.pafosbirdpark.com. Admission 9€, 5€ children. Open daily Oct–Mar 9am–5pm; Apr–Sept 9am–sunset.

2 ★★★ Lara Beach. Lara Beach is a broad sweep of sand with safe swimming, and is delightfully secluded. This is a national park with no facilities, so pack water and a picnic. Lara is an absolute must for families in turtle-hatching season (July to September) for the once-in-a-lifetime educational opportunity of visiting the turtle hatchery. Children can hold the baby turtles, which are perfect miniatures of the adults that lay their eggs here every year. ⌚ ½ day.

3 ★ Aphrodite Water Park. One of three big waterparks on the island, Aphrodite is well laid out with plenty of shade. All ages love it; there are slides, a pirate ship and a pool for little children and—for



Turtle nest on Lara Beach.

those over 120cm (3.9 ft.) Kamikaze, Free Fall and Black Hole. At the very least, cool off in the big wave pool with DJs playing loud music or take a lazy river ride. ⌚ 1 day. *Off Poseidonos Avenue, Paphos.* ☎ 26 913 638. www.aphroditewaterpark.com. Admission 25.63€ adults and over 12s, 13.67€ age 3–11, under 3s free. You can also buy two-visit tickets and season passes. Open May–Jun 10:30am–5:30pm; Jul–Aug 10am–6pm; Sept–Oct 10am–5pm.

4 ★★ Coral Beach. Easily the most attractive beach in Paphos and perfect for families. A 15-minute drive north of the town, the Blue Flag Coral Beach is an arc of golden sand with sandstone cliffs at either end. The gently shelving sea floor is perfect for small children to splash around. There are sunbeds and umbrellas to rent and water toys ranging from kayaks and pedalos

(with slides) to banana boats, inner tubes, wake boarding and paragliding. Parking is free and a wooden boardwalk leads down to the sand. Go at sunset when the crowds have left – the light on the gold-coloured rock is breathtaking and in summer it's warm enough to swim at dusk.

5 ★ Coral Beach Bar. The beach has a decent snack bar serving salads and sandwiches – and even a massage pavilion. ☎ 25 943 98. \$.

6 ★ Oleastro Olive Park. Situated inland from Pissouri, just beyond the village of Anogyra, the Olive Park is a great family outing and offers an interesting insight into olive cultivation and production. Oleastro nestles on a hillside amidst an organic olive grove, its stone walls, wooden balconies and terracotta tiles are reminiscent of an old Cypriot house. Visitors learn about 60,000 years of olive cultivation and oil extraction, from old-fashioned pressing to high-tech, eco-friendly techniques. The museum illustrates all the byproducts of olive cultivation, including soap and wood from the ancient trees.

There's a playground, pony rides and an art corner for children, as well as an organic cafe serving off-the-beat recipes handed down in the owner's family. Go on Sunday, when there's a buffet, so you can try everything. *10km (6 miles) off the A6 motorway, past the village of Anogyra.* ☎ 99 565 768. www.oleastro.com.cy. Admission 2.56€, 1.71€ children. Open daily 10am–7pm.

7 ★★★ Jeep Safaris. Leave the car behind one day and take an Ascot Jeep Safari into the Troodos or across Akamas. Children love bumping along the dirt tracks and the guides are full of information on the island's herbs, birds, flowers and reptiles. The Akamas tour out of Paphos goes up the wild, rugged west coast and through the forest, mainly on dirt tracks, to Polis and Latchi in the north, heading back to Paphos via the mountains and the village of Stroumpi. There's also a Troodos tour (see Chapter 5) through pine forests and villages that calls at a winery, the beautiful Kelefos Medieval Bridge, buried deep in the forest, Kykkos Monastery, Mount Olympus (the highest point on the island) and the

Pedalos with slides on Coral Beach.





Learn the history of olive cultivation at the Oleastro Olive Park.

Caledonian waterfall. **Ascot Jeep Safaris.** ☎ 25 329 388. www.ascotrentacar.com. **Akamas Tour.** Admission 59.85€, 34.20€ children. Open Mon, Wed & Fri. **Troodos Tour.** Admission 63.27€, 34.20€ children. Open Tues, Thurs & Sat.

8 Governor's Beach. Break the drive from Paphos to Ayia Napa with lunch and swimming at Governor's Beach, a stretch of sand beyond Limassol framed by towering white cliffs. The restaurant on the clifftop, Panayotis, specialises in fish meze and tends to attract more locals and expats than tourists. Older children will love it here as they can be freed to play on the beach below while parents sit and relax on the shady terrace. **Governor's Beach.** ☎ 99 633 258. Lunch & dinner daily.

9 ★★ Mazotos Camel Park. An off-the-beaten-track park with a herd of resident camels, which were once very important in Cyprus for transporting copper ore from the mines in the Troodos to the coast. Today, these camels are fat and pampered, straining themselves no more than the occasional beach ride or—for very small children—circling the paddock on a rein. In addition to the camels, there is a playground

with a bouncy castle and a petting zoo set around a big model of Noah's Ark. Make a day of it by adding lunch at the park's taverna, which has its own pool. **Mazotos village, very well signposted from the B4 coast road between Larnaca and Zygi.** Admission 3€, 2€ children, which is deducted from the price of camel rides of 9€, 6€ children. Open 9am–5pm winter; 9am–7pm summer.

Explore the Troodos in an Ascot Jeep.





Meet the residents of the camel park in Mazotos.

10 Ayia Napa. Beyond the nightclubs Ayia Napa has the island's best beaches for families—clean, sandy and gently shelving—and an endless array of manufactured entertainment, from the bungee-jumping cranes on the waterfront (for me, more of a spectator sport than a participation event) to the massive Waterworld waterpark and

Find family-friendly beaches at Ayia Napa.

catamaran day cruises along the coast. In an attempt to take visitors beyond the beach, the local tourist board offers two 3-hour guided walks.

'The Ayia Napa You Don't Know' visits the old aqueduct, the monastery, a couple of churches, the Museum of Marine Life and a traditional coffee shop, and includes a ride on an old wooden bus.

'Ayia Napa and the Sea' is a walk around Cape Greco, a coffee stop at the fishing harbour (there's a wooden bus involved in this tour, too) and a visit to the Roman tombs at Makronissos. **Book either tour in advance through the CTO on Leoforos Kryou Nerou 12.** ☎ 23 721 796.

11 Cape Greco. The far south-eastern tip of the island, Cape Greco is a rocky peninsula, accessible only on foot or bicycle. The air here is fragrant with wild herbs. Either drive all the way or, outside the summer, walk the 7km (4½ miles) along the coast from Ayia Napa. From the viewing pavilion at the top of the cliff, you can see for miles along the jagged coastline studded with sea caves, rock arches and tiny coves. Sunset is the best time to visit—although it can be busy in summer. ●

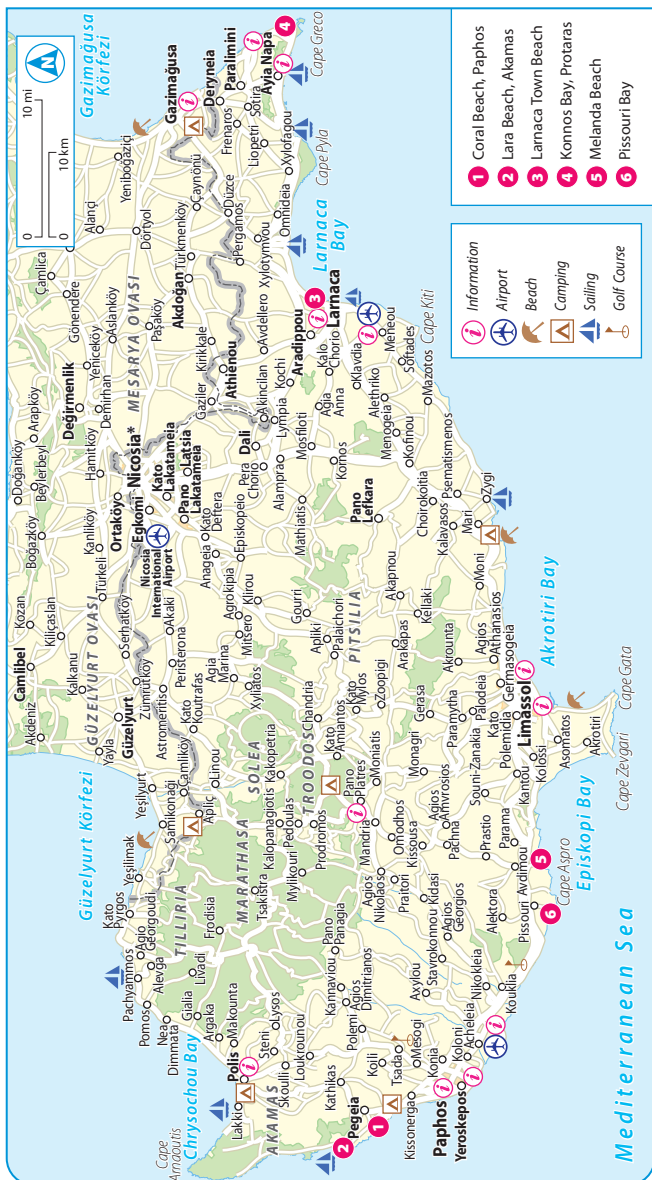


4

The Great **Outdoors**



Best Beaches & Waterfronts



Previous page: Hibiscus flowers.

Cypriot beaches vary from stretches of soft, white sand to pebbles or slabs of flat, sun-bleached rock on which to bask. Many of the best beaches are the least accessible, on the remote Akamas Peninsula to the west, while for families, the eastern resorts of Ayia Napa and Protaras have the finest sand, combined with clear, aquamarine water.

TIP

All beaches in Cyprus are public and in the main resorts you can walk all the way along the seafront, including through the grounds of hotels.

1 ★★ kids Coral Beach, Paphos. Some 12km (7½ miles) northwest of Paphos along the coast road, the enclave of Coral Bay has a golden crescent of sand flanked by high cliffs and protected from the sea breezes. Needless to say, it's always busy in summer and is very popular with families because of the shallow water and gently shelving sea floor. There's parking, umbrellas to rent, a bar serving all-day drinks and snacks and a massage pavilion. Coral Bay Watersports, a simple beach shack, rents out kayaks and pedalos and tows people round on banana boats and in inner tubes. If you've been walking on Akamas or sightseeing

all day, come to Coral Beach late afternoon as the crowds are thinning. I often stay here until dusk, when I have the beach to myself.

2 ★★ kids Lara Beach, Akamas. The protected Lara Beach is one of the last nesting places in the Mediterranean of the loggerhead turtle and green turtle and from July to September, the Lara Turtle Conservation Project sets up camp on the sand, protecting the buried turtle nests from predatory foxes by surrounding them with metal cages. The conservationists release 6,000 hatchling turtles into the sea every summer, three times the number that would make it if nature were left to take its course. The beach itself, accessed by a dirt track that runs along the coast of the Akamas Peninsula, spans out either side of a little headland, a vast sweep of sand that's rarely crowded and frequented mainly by Cypriots. Bring shade, water and a picnic as there

Coral Beach is popular with families during the summer.





Spot the turtle nests on Lara Beach.

are no facilities. I love the silence and the remoteness of this place—and if it's not busy, you can go skinny dipping at the far right-hand end, although this is not strictly legal.

3 ★ kids Larnaca Town Beach. Larnaca's long town beach, Finikoudes, had a huge facelift in the 1990s, the entire seafront becoming pedestrianised with a palm-lined walkway that stretches 800m (2,624 ft.) from the old fishing port to the marina. Bars, cafes and chill-out beach clubs moved in along the

promenade and although the sand is slightly coarse, the whole scene adds up to a decent urban beach, not quite Miami or Tel Aviv, but lively and buzzing right up until midnight. It's also a very safe neighbourhood if you're travelling with teens who want to explore alone. Various concessions offer sun loungers, umbrellas, banana boat rides, pedalos and parasailing and the swimming is safe for children. Take a break from sunbathing at lunchtime and try one of the fish tavernas at the western end of the beach—Varioshiotis and Militzes are both excellent. *See p 71.*

4 ★★★ kids Konnos Bay, Protaras. For their slightly tarnished reputations as downmarket clubbing resorts, Ayia Napa and its neighbour, Protaras, are blessed with the island's finest concentration of soft sand beaches and coves of crystal-clear water. The two resorts lie either side of the Cape Greco promontory, itself an easy and rewarding walk, for the sweeping coastal views and abundance of wild flowers. Konnos Bay, on the Protaras side of Cape Greco, is a sheltered cove with golden sand and rocks at either end, ideal for snorkelling and looking at the

Stop off at one of the colourful cafes along Larnaca Beach.





The peaceful Pissouri Bay resort.

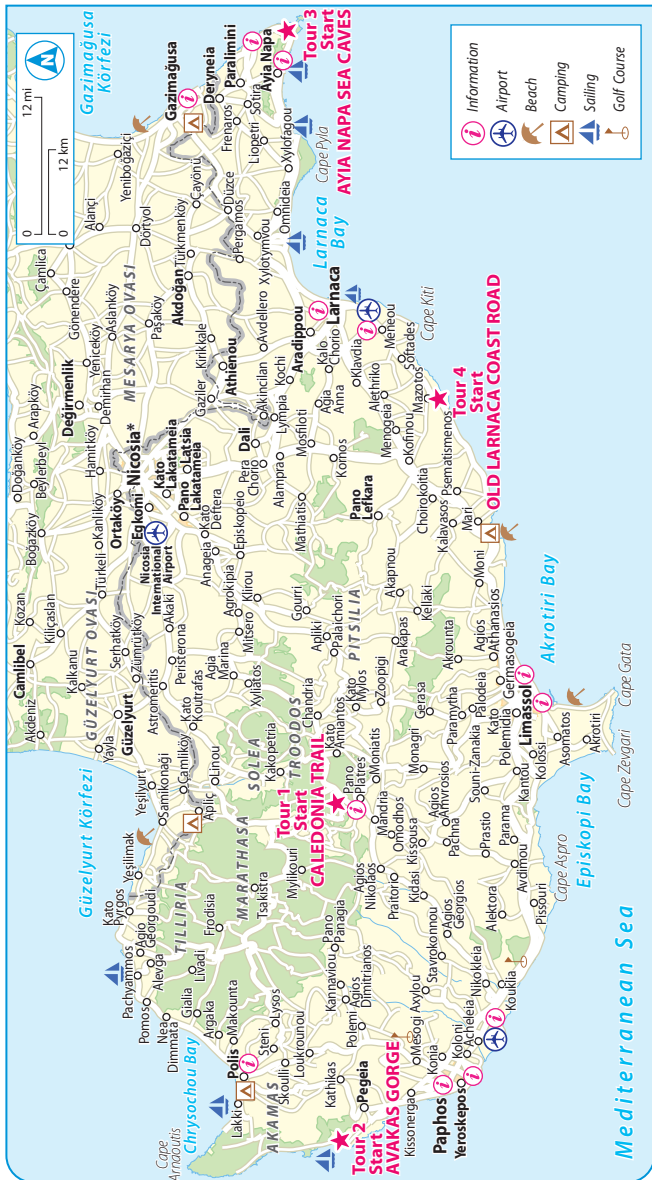
abundance of starfish on the sea bed. There's a cafe selling food and drinks and a watersports concession. Get there early before the day trippers, most of whom arrive by boat, or join a boat safari yourself from Ayia Napa. Dolphin Boats depart at 10:30am and 13:39pm from Ayia Napa harbour for a 3-hour coastal sightseeing trip including a view of the sea caves around Cape Greco, feeding fish in an inlet known as the Blue Lagoon, optional cliff jumping, swimming at Konnos and a foray up to the 'ghost town' of Famagusta, the area of no-man's-land between the Greek Cypriot side and the Turkish occupied area. www.dolphinboat-safari.com.

5 ★ Melanda Beach. Just on the Limassol side of Pissouri there are signs to Avdimou and the Melanda Beach Cafe. Branch right before the cafe and drive or walk past a string of small bays until you arrive at a sheltered cove backed by dramatic red sandstone cliffs. The beach here is stony but there's sand as soon as you step into the water. Bring a picnic as there are no

facilities. Be warned that this is a popular nudist beach; it's not official but naturists come here because of the isolation and the beauty of the bay.

6 ★ kids Pissouri Bay. Halfway between Limassol and Paphos and signposted as 'Pissouri Jetty' from the motorway, Pissouri Bay is a growing resort that still retains an air of peace and quiet, with no nightclubs, no strip, a couple of seriously good tavernas and a smart hotel. The beach here is a broad half-moon of pebbles, which means the sea is glass-clear. There isn't any shade and because it's stony and less crowded than other beaches, not much in the way of watersports, which is the biggest appeal to lovers of solitude. My perfect day here would be to turn up late morning, swim and sunbathe, move into Limanaki restaurant if you're in the mood for a Lebanese, Indian and French-influenced lunch or Captain's Bay, right on the beach, for a superb fish meze. **Limanaki.** ☎ 25 221 288. www.limanakipissouri.com. **Book ahead at least 2 days. Captain's Bay.** ☎ 25 221 158.

Hiking & Cycling



Away from the busy resorts, Cyprus lends itself completely to hiking and cycling. Outside the hottest summer months of June to September, walking in the Troodos Mountains and along the coastal paths is a joy, with trails through pine forests, alongside mountain streams. Cycling is popular, too, particularly mountain biking in the Troodos and foothills.

Tour One: The Caledonia Trail

The Caledonia Trail in the Troodos Mountains is a fairly easy downhill walk through dappled, deciduous woodland, alongside the river Kyros Potamos, which is usually a rushing mountain stream except in times of extreme drought.

The well-marked path is only 3km (2 miles) long, although the descent takes a couple of hours as there's lots of picking your way over rocks and water on the stepping stones; after heavy rain, the stones will be slippery. Bring swimming gear as there's a chance for a dip in the rock pool at the foot of the trail. Pack a picnic, too; you'll encounter several tempting spots under the trees, with glimpses through the forest of the surrounding Troodos Mountains. **START:** *Near the Presidential Palace. Trip length: 3km (2 miles). Allow 2 hr.*

1 ★★ **Kids** Starting the Trail.

Follow the signs to the Presidential Palace at Troodos on the old Troodos–Platres road and park at the trail head, which is signposted. The trail is easy to spot; look out for the labels on the trees and plants as you pick your way down the mountainside through the forest. As well as pines, horse chestnut and wild plums grow here, not to mention a large number of shrubs and mountain wildflowers. Most of the species are labelled and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) provides a free leaflet with explanations about the plants.

The trail criss-crosses the river intermittently, so it is not suitable for anybody with mobility difficulties.

There is no danger as such but on several instances, you have to hop from one stepping stone to the next.

2 Caledonia Falls. Towards the end of the path, the river gathers pace and cascades over a jutting rock face into a natural, shaded pool surrounded by vegetation. This is the actual Caledonia Falls, a great stop for a swim.

3 Psilo Dentron. Another treat awaits; the trail ends at the Psilo Dentron restaurant, a welcoming establishment next to a trout farm, where you can eat freshly grilled mountain trout straight from a huge outdoor barbecue. Get the restaurant to order a taxi back up to the trail head to pick up your car—unless you fancy the trail in reverse, a 3km (2 miles) uphill climb.

Tour Two: The Avakas Gorge

A sheer defile cut through the limestone cliffs of Akamas, north of

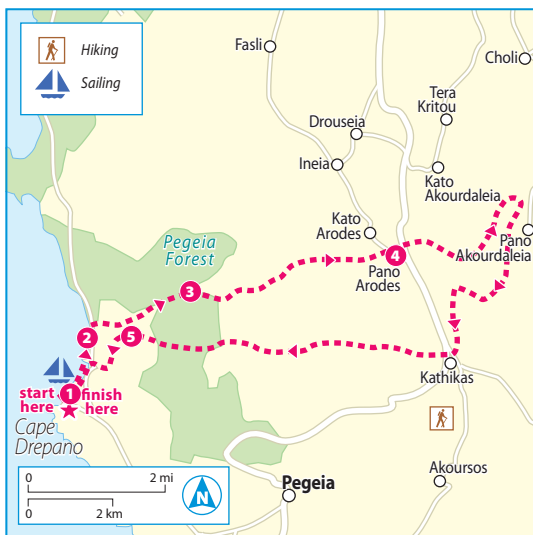
Spot mountain wildflowers whilst walking through the Troodos.



Tour One



Tour Two



Tour Three



Tour Four



Paphos, the Avakas Gorge is an easy walk, or if you head further in, a walk with some scrambling. **START: Akamas.** *Trip length: 3km (2 miles). Allow 2 hr if you turn back at the wedged rock, 3½ hr if you carry on to Pano Arodes.*

1 Agios Giorgios. Drive north from Paphos through the tiny fishing village of Agios Giorgios, itself worth a stop for a look at the little harbour, dominated by an incongruously large Greek Orthodox church.

2 Akamas. Beyond the village, the national park of Akamas begins, all buildings fade away and the tarmac road turns to a rutted dirt track. The gorge entrance is signposted, to the right off the main road. Park here and continue on foot.

Like many of the marked nature trails on Cyprus, you'll see faded little signs identifying trees and shrubs. Expect to see pine trees, Mediterranean cypress, plane trees, junipers, oleanders, tamarisks, thorny brooms, wild fig trees, carob and olive trees along the path. This rubble-strewn sun trap is also a great favourite basking spot for lizards and I spotted a number of different species of butterfly before the walls of the gorge closed in and began to block out the light.

There is a river trickling apathetically through the gorge most of the year, with the potential for flash floods if you're caught in a big storm. The slimy water was not enticing at all on my visit but the scenery is dramatic: giant boulders strewn across the river bed and towering limestone walls streaked with the colours of the different minerals in the rock. There is some scrambling over the bigger rocks so be careful.

3 The Round Boulder. You'll reach a point where a huge, round boulder is seemingly suspended above you; it's wedged safely



The round boulder in the Avakas Gorge.

between the walls of the gorge and makes a great photo stop. The rock was dislodged during an earthquake about 15 years ago. It's not the only thing to topple off the top; a sheep had met an unfortunate end on my visit. Most people turn back after the boulder as the scrambling becomes more demanding.

4 Pano Arodes. You can, however, carry on and walk right up to the top of the gorge near the village of Pano Arodes. This is a challenging walk and not suitable for children or anybody unsteady on their feet. You'll end up in the village and will need to arrange a lift home.

5 The Last Castle. If you treat this walk as an out-and-back, don't miss the excellent taverna, the Last Castle, high on the hill over where you'll have parked, a good place to cool off and admire the views of Paphos to the west and Akamas to the east.

Tour Three: The Ayia Napa Sea Caves

This is an easy walk along spectacular coastal paths—but you'll need a head for heights. What I love about this walk is that you leave the bustle and neon of Ayia Napa for some of the island's most breathtaking coastal scenery. The whole shoreline along here is riddled with sea caves, towers, stacks and natural bridges and there are a number of vantage points from which to admire them. **START:** *Park at the Agioi Anargyroi chapel just past Cape Greco.*

1 Agioi Anargyroi. The walk is 4km (2½ miles) in the direction back towards Ayia Napa so you will have to double it and do there and back or arrange to be collected at the end. A car or bicycle is a good idea here as I'd also highly recommend a detour up to the Cape itself to complete the experience, as the views are spectacular, taking in the whole of the southeast coast beyond Ayia Napa to hazy Larnaca in one direction and north towards the forbidden fruit (to Cypriots, at least) of ghostly Famagusta, in the Turkish occupied area.

For the walk, simply follow the trail along the coast, past meadows of wildflowers on one side and dramatic drop-offs down to the sea on the other.

2 Rock Arch. At one point, the trail crosses the natural rock arch Kamara tou Koraka. The sea is so clear you can see individual rocks on the sea bed below; it really is an invigorating spot.

3 Cape Greco. If you take the detour up to the Cape later, follow the signs to Cape Greco from the main road and drive as far as you can from the turnoff. Eventually, you'll arrive at a small, rocky car park. From here, it's only 15 minutes on foot up a herb-scented trail to a small pavilion and 360-degree views over where you've just walked. I could stay forever; in May, I had the whole place to myself although it gets busy in summer.

Tour Four: Cycling to Lefkara & along the old Larnaca coast road

Cycling is a fast-growing sport in Cyprus with a number of specialist hire shops springing up in recent

Breathtaking coastal scenery surrounding the Ayia Napa sea caves.





Take a gentle cycling route along the coast.

years as well as guided tours. The scope of the sport varies from a gentle pedal along a flat, paved coastal road to some seriously challenging mountain biking that is only suited for experts. The Cyprus Tourism Organisation (see Savvy Traveler) produces a special booklet, *Cyprus Cycling Routes*, containing suggested routes, some of which can be adapted and shortened.

Cycling is the perfect way to see the island. You'll have more interaction with villagers than you would in a car and can easily stop spontaneously to appreciate everything from a spectacular view to a village church or a colourful butterfly. This is one of my favourite routes as it takes in an unusually empty stretch of coast, one of the most important archaeological sites and the popular arts and crafts village of Lefkara.

START: *Mazotos.*

1 Mazotos. Start in Mazotos, a sleepy farming village located 1 km (½ mile) or so inland from the coast, just off the F403, amidst agricultural fields. Follow the road west towards the fishing village of Zygi (which is signposted) and the first part of the ride continues all the way to Zygi along this little-used route, long since replaced by the Limassol–Larnaca motorway.

2 Zygi. As you pedal along with the sea sparkling on one side and fields of potatoes and watermelons on the other, it's easy to imagine that the whole coastline would have looked like this once, before tourism developed. There are no sights here but a wonderful sense of peace. You'll pass a couple of gritty beaches, often with people fishing, and a few modern housing developments, but as a flat road with little traffic, this is ideal cycling territory. Zygi has a number of fish tavernas and is a good place for a coffee stop.

3 Choirokoitia. Turn inland here on the F115 road to Psematismenos and cross over the motorway via the footbridge. There's a gentle climb here on the F112 to Choirokoitia, where I'd suggest taking a break to visit the Neolithic settlements. Carry on through the village and prepare for the long, slow climb up to Vavla, where you should turn right to Kato Drys.

4 Kato Drys. Before you arrive at Kato Drys, a small hamlet where the village women make lace, stop at Agios Minos, a little 15th-century monastery where the nuns today paint icons and make honey, which is for sale. Kato Drys itself is one of

Cycle Hire in Cyprus

- **Cyprus Villages Bike Centre.** 7740 Tochni. ☎ 24 332 998. www.cyprusvillages.com.cy.
- **Bike Cyprus.** ☎ 25 634 093. www.bikecyprus.com. Has shops at the Hawaii Grand Hotel, St Raphael Resort, Elias Beach Hotel, Atalantica Miramare Beach Hotel and Aquarius Beach Hotel.
- **Wheelie Cyprus.** PO Box 66079, 8830 Polis Chrysochous. ☎ 99 350 898. www.wheeliecyprus.com. British-run guided bike tours around Polis with accommodation and transport of bikes included.



Cycling is the perfect way to see the island.

the island's wealthier villages, with some fine old merchants' houses.

The country road joins the main Larnaca–Lefkara road now and is busier, as this is the heart of the island's lace-making industry and a popular visitor attraction.

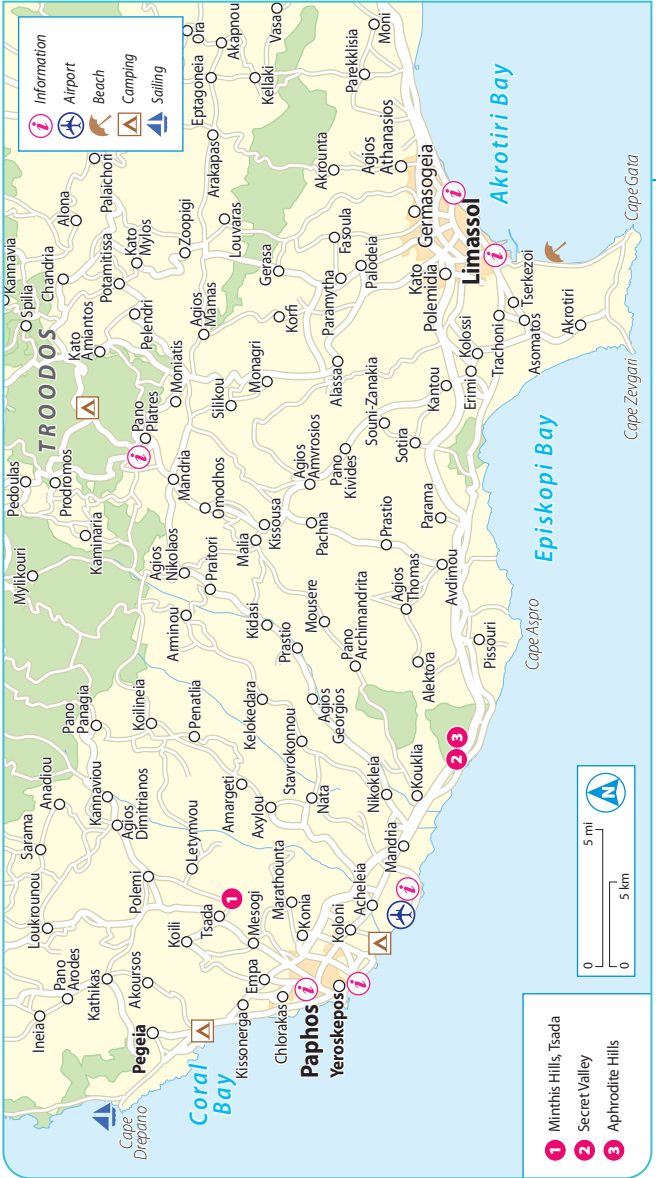
The rooftops of Lefkara village.



5 Lefkara. Turn left onto the E105 and ride to Pano Lefkara, a village of stone-built houses all constructed from the same white limestone, with terracotta roofs. These are again merchants' houses; in the past, the women wove lace and created filigree silver items while the men of the village travelled to sell it, or engaged themselves in other occupations like fishing. You can wheel the bike through the streets and stop to look at the lace-making workshops. There's a particularly good view from the church across the almond groves below the village, dazzling with pale pink blossom in February.

6 The E105. From Lefkara, cycle back downhill on the E105 through stone-built villages and fruit orchards to Kofinou and then back on the F107 and F403 to Mazotos.

Golf



Cyprus has three championship golf courses, sprawling over the pine and scrub-covered hills to the west of the island. Each has its own characteristics, with ravines, lakes and some very rocky rough to negotiate. All three are elevated, which means they're cooled by sea breezes and have tantalising views of the blue sea in the distance. Beginners could take lessons at Aphrodite Hills; less experienced players should start with Tsada before moving onto the other two courses.

1 ★★ Minthis Hills, Tsada. The island's first 'proper' 18-hole course, built in 1994 and renovated in 2006, Tsada was supposed to be one of a long line of courses that would revolutionise the island's golf product. In fact, development island-wide has been slow because of the lack of water but this Donald Steel-designed course is now beautifully mature, winding through the hills around the site of a 12th-century monastery.

The course is located inland from Paphos, about half-an-hour's drive along the B7 towards Polis, at a cool elevation of 550m (1,804 ft.), which makes play even in the summer pleasant. A par 71, 5,828m (19,120 ft.) layout, the course's fairways are lined with cypress, olive and citrus trees, with several raised tees and bunkers with rocky surrounds. There's a clubhouse with bar and restaurant, a putting green, a new driving range

and pro shop. Expect to pay about 65€ per round in peak season, the spring and autumn. ☎ 26 642 774. www.cyprusgolf.com/tsada.

2 ★★ Secret Valley. Secret Valley, which is indeed carefully hidden in the hills near the Rock of Aphrodite on the island's south coast, was Cyprus's second championship course to be built, opening in 1996. Visiting golfers generally rate it as more challenging than the Tsada course. A par 71, 5,904m (19,370 ft.) layout, Secret Valley winds around a rocky dip between the wooded hills, the fairways lined with mature trees, rock outcrops and more than a few water hazards of streams and artificial lakes. Don't bother to hire a buggy unless it's really hot—the course is actually fairly flat. The clubhouse has a more luxurious feel than that of Tsada, with uninterrupted views of the 18th green. The two clubs share a pro, who gives

Minthis Hills, Tsada.





Secret Valley, carefully hidden in the hills near the Rock of Aphrodite.

lessons. ☎ 26 274 000. Rates: 65€ for one round. www.cyprusgolf.com/sv.

3 ★★ Aphrodite Hills. The championship course at Aphrodite Hills changed the face of golf in Cyprus when it opened in 2002 as part of an ambitious development of golf, villas, a tennis academy and a five-star hotel. The par 71, 6,269m (29,567 ft.) course, designed by Cabell B. Robinson, weaves around the whole development, so you'll be peering into the garden of a multi-million-dollar villa one moment, gazing at the distant sea the next and losing your ball in the craggy ravine that slices the complex into two plateaux the next. The whole layout is surrounded by protected forest, giving it a pleasantly isolated feel; indeed, the silence and peace up here, high above the coast, is what people come for. This, and the golf itself, is said to rival top courses in Spain and Portugal, which is a great

honour in European golfing circles. The course, lined with carob and olive trees, is dotted with interesting archaeological features as well as natural hazards; as early as the first fairway you'll come across an 18th-century kiln, while the 13th runs right alongside the ravine, with dramatic drop-offs to one side. There's a 350m (1,148 ft.) driving range, three-hole practice course, PGA golf academy which even offers children's lessons and family clinics, and a swish pro shop. The clubhouse overlooking the course has a sunny terrace overlooking the 18th green, used for a lot of private parties as well as members' events because of its romantic setting. Try to finish your round just before sunset and sit on the terrace as the sky to the west turns deep red, the cicadas begin to chirp and the shadows lengthen over the fairway. Rates: from 54€ (per person, including 1 buggy, 2 people sharing). See p 91. ●

5

The Best **Regional Tours**



Western Troodos

- 1 Anogyra
- 2 Arsos
- 3 Kelefos Medieval Bridge
- 4 Kykkos Monastery
- 5 Cedar Valley
- 6 Stavros tis Psokas
- 7 Stavros tis Psokas
Forestry Station
- 8 Lysos
- 9 Drouseia

-  Information
-  Airport
-  Marina
-  Camping
-  Golf Course
-  Hiking
-  Picnic Site



Previous page: The Troodos Mountains in spring.

The western flanks of the Troodos mountain range encompass a variety of landscapes, from stony hills grazed by vast herds of goats to regimented vines, giving way at greater altitude to pine forest, snow-covered in winter. This is the Cyprus few visitors take time to discover, other than on ordered day trips, but it is a highly rewarding exploration for the independent traveller. **START: Limassol.**
Trip length: 124km (77 miles). Three days.

Having climbed into the mountains, the route incorporates the magnificent Cedar Valley, a unique area of the Paphos Forest populated by thousands of towering cedar trees. The Kelefos Medieval Bridge, in the midst of deciduous forest, reveals the old 'Camel Trail' from the mountain mines to the coast, while the village of Drouseia is a shining example of a more contemporary form of travel, agrotourism, its stone houses carefully restored to offer visitors accommodation in a rural setting, complete with braying donkeys and crowing roosters.

Because much of the driving is on untarred roads, you will need a four-wheel-drive vehicle for this tour. I suggest making a few days of the itinerary, staying in mountain village accommodation.

1 ★★ Kids Anogyra. Leave the A5 Limassol–Paphos motorway at Avdimou and head up into the hills through groves of carob and almond trees to the village of Anogyra, an important centre for the island's carob industry. There's a small carob museum here (p 24, **9**) and a *pasteli* festival in September celebrating the sticky carob sweets that are made here. Before you enter the village, stop for a look at the ruined 14th-century monastery on the right, Timios Stavros. The building is in dire need of restoration but you can see some faded frescoes on the walls. Legend has it that there's a secret tunnel underneath where the monks once stored gold and silver.



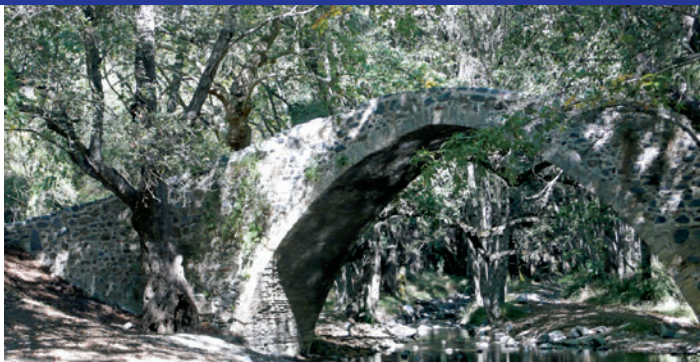
The small carob museum in Anogyra.

Carry on northbound on the F608 and turn left onto the E601, following signs to Arsos. Distance: 21km (13 miles).

2 Arsos, en route to the next stop, is in the heart of the Limassol wine-growing district, although the wineries are on the outskirts and the centre is blissfully quiet, the tangle of narrow lanes revealing an old olive press and a natural spring.

Follow the F615 north to Agios Nikolaos; after the village, there's a sharp left turn down a dirt road to the Kelefos Medieval Bridge. Distance: 3km (2 miles).

3 ★★ Kelefos Medieval Bridge. Hidden deep in the forest and nowadays leading to nowhere, this high, graceful stone arch dates



Kelefos Medieval bridge is hidden deep in the Troodos forest.

back to the 15th century and is part of the former Kamilostrata, or Camel Trail, which led from the copper mines in the Troodos to the coast, an arduous journey of several days for camel trains bearing copper. The bridge and surrounding shady woodlands make an excellent picnic spot; you can paddle in the cool water and look for the brown and freshwater crabs that live here.

Drive back to Agios Nikolaos and take the F616 to Mandria. Then follow the signs to Platres, Prodromos and Pedoulas, passing through these villages towards Kykkos. Distance: 32km (20 miles).

4 ★★ kids Kykkos Monastery. One of the most lavishly wealthy monasteries on the island. For more details see p 37, **8**.

Follow the E912 towards Kampos and fork left towards Stavros tis Psokas. Fork left again down a bumpy trail signposted 'Cedar Valley'. Distance: 12km (7½ miles).

5 ★ Cedar Valley. Cedar Valley stretches out below you now, a deep

gully populated by hundreds of towering *Cedrus brevifolia*, Cyprus's indigenous cedar, slightly different from the mighty Lebanese version. The views across the Paphos Forest are breathtaking; mile upon mile of bottle green pines, cedars and golden oaks, the mighty Mount Olympus, the island's tallest, rising up to the east. Stop at the picnic site for a stroll or for lunch in the shade; keen hikers can follow the trail up Tripylos Mountain from the picnic site, which takes about an hour one way.

Drive back to the junction with the road and follow the contours of the mountain around to Stavros

tis Psokas. Distance: 17km (10½ miles).

6 ★ kids Stavros tis

Psokas. The main reason for visiting the Stavros tis Psokas Forestry Station is to see the mouflon, the rare mountain sheep that is indigenous to Cyprus but highly endangered due to loss of its habitat. Several specimens are kept in a big enclosure up here. Three relatively easy hikes cover the area around the forest station and you'll see a lot of walkers in spring and



Lavish mosaic at the Kykkos Monastery.

Hiking the Medieval Bridges

Keen walkers may want to try Enetika Gefyria, one of the tougher nature trails marked on the CTO's Troodos map and detailed in the free 'Nature Trails' guide published by the CTO. This is a 17km (10 ½ miles), 6-hour hike over varied terrain, some very steep, through dense pine forest and over slippery rock, so don't attempt it unless you are fit. The route starts in Kaminaria village and follows parts of the old camel trail across the island's three medieval bridges, Elaia, Kelefos and Roudias, finishing at Vretsia village.

autumn, when the weather is usually perfect for hiking. Cypriots claim that this is the coolest (in the sense of the most refreshing) spot on the island.

7P★ Stavros tis Psokas Forestry Station. There's a cafeteria stop for refreshments here and you can even overnight at the basic lodge. At the weekend, locals drive up to barbecue souvlaki and sausages in the special pits under the pine trees. ☎ 25 943 98. \$.

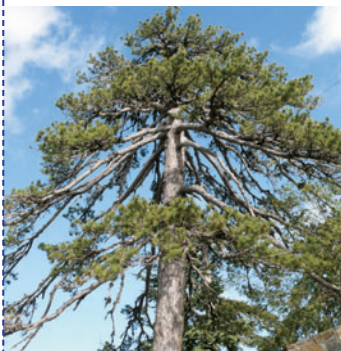
Back in the car, follow the dirt track through the forest to Lysos. Distance: 19km (12 miles).

8 Lysos. Take a moment to walk through the tiny hamlet of Lysos. There's a wonderful view from the church across the sloping coastal plain to the sea. The cobbled square by the church contains a number of water fountains and used to be the focal point of village life, as the women came here daily to collect water and exchange gossip. A lot of expats have built or bought property around Lysos and there's a fair amount of villa development.

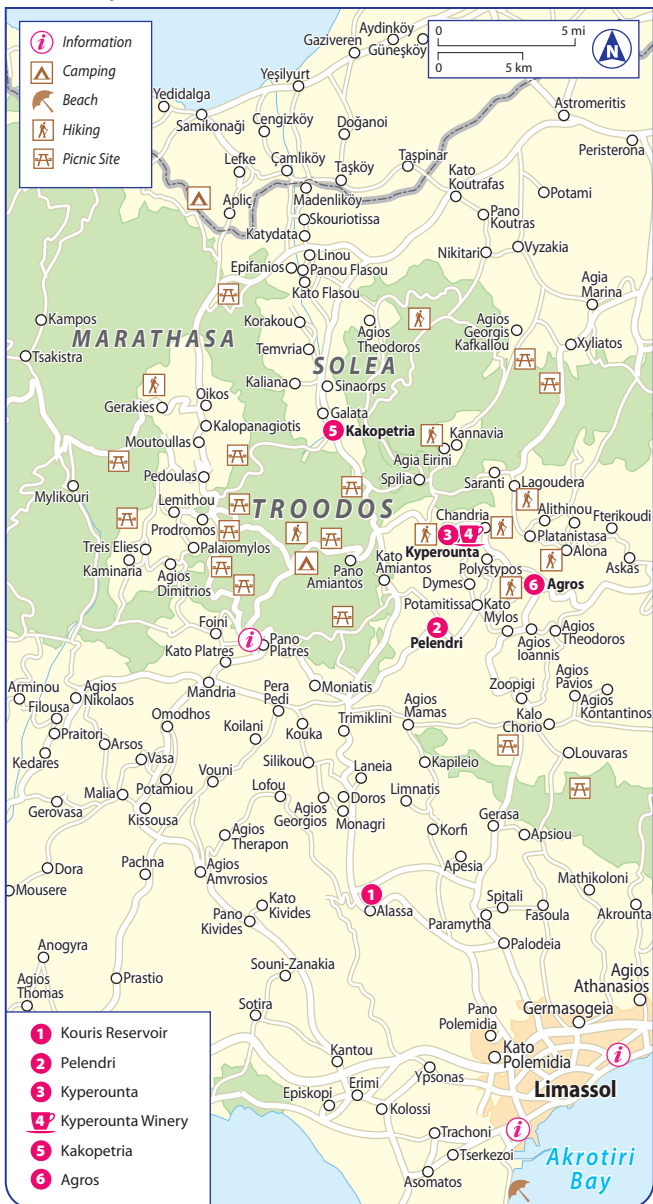
After Lysos, take the F723 north towards Polis. Pass south of the little town and head south on the E709 towards Drouseia 21km (13 miles).

9 Drouseia. The name 'Drouseia' means 'cool and fresh', after the sea breeze blowing inland from the nearby Akamas Peninsula. This extremely pretty village, with sweeping views of the sparkling Chrysohou Bay to the north, the forested mountains to the east and the limestone scrublands of Akamas to the west, is a popular holiday spot for escapists. Stay the night here and eat meze with the locals in the taverna; it's a completely different experience to hotel life down on the coast. Drouseia and several of the surrounding villages have benefited from the Laona Foundation, a rural regeneration project set up in the 1990s to restore old village houses and tavernas and attract low-key tourism to the villages north of Paphos. *For information on accommodation in the area, visit www.agrotourism.com.cy.*

The indigenous cedar is slightly different from the Lebanese version.



Valleys of the Eastern Troodos



The high valleys and mountain villages of the eastern Troodos are much quieter than their western cousins, the villagers busying themselves with agriculture, viticulture and goat herding. You'll come across small pockets of entrepreneurial ecotourism, too, in the form of smartly restored stone houses, 'slow food' tavernas and local enterprises offering cycling and hiking in the Solea Valley.

START: Limassol. Trip length: 92km (57 miles). Three days.

This drive starts and finishes on the coast, staying on tarmac roads throughout, taking in villages in the foothills as well as mountain towns in the high Troodos, which means it's suitable for March to November only.

1 ★ Kouris Reservoir. Head inland from Limassol on the B8; although it feels as though you're going west, the route will eventually take you over the top of the Troodos and eastwards to the valleys looking down towards Nicosia and the Turkish-occupied north. Stop at Alassa for the view across the Kouris reservoir, the island's largest; I was surprised to see someone waterskiing as I stood amongst tall grasses and gently buzzing insects, taking in the scene of the almost-turquoise water below, but the island's reservoirs are often multi-use like this.

Turn right at the sign for Pelendri on the E806. Distance: 23km (14 miles).

2 ★ Pelendri is a bustling village located on the slopes of the Limnatis river valley, where many of the inhabitants are involved in the wine industry. At the southern end of the village, look for the tiny, squat 12th-century Timios Stavros church, one of the UNESCO-protected Painted Churches of the Troodos. The austere exterior belies a lavishly painted inside, the walls covered with richly coloured frescoes from the 14th century. In the apse, you can see fragments of the original, 12th-century wall paintings under the frescoes.

Leave the village on the E806 and at Potamitissa, take the winding F949 to Kyperounta. Distance: 4km (2½ miles).

3 ★ Kyperounta. A thriving wine-producing village, Kyperounta is a green mish-mash of smallholdings and vegetable plots, orchards, stone houses and vineyards.

4 ★ Kyperounta Winery. This winery is enjoying success with its Petritis Xynisteri and Andessitis, as well as some decent chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. ☎ 25 532 043. \$-\$\$\$.

Take the B9 to Kakopetria. Distance: 13km (8 miles).

5 ★ Kakopetria. The architecture is different in this busy mountain village, which slopes steeply up the banks of the Karkotis river in the

Water skier on the Kouris reservoir.



Solea Valley. Houses are built from mudbrick and wood as well as stone and many have overhanging wooden balconies, festooned with flowers in summer. The steeply pitched roofs are to protect the buildings from snowfall; on the northern flank of Mount Olympus, just south of the village, there's a ski resort at 1,950m (6,398 ft.) above sea level (worth looking at for novelty value if you're here in winter but not really somewhere serious skiers should aspire to conquering). The name Kakopetria means 'wicked rock' and local lore has it that this comes from a tragedy in which a young couple were killed at their wedding ceremony by a falling rock during an earthquake.

Kakopetria is a busy village, and a walking and mountain-biking centre with some decent accommodation.

The Linos Inn ☎ 22 923 161, www.linos-inn.com.cy) has a cosy restaurant and some surprisingly decadent rooms with wood-beamed ceilings, four-poster beds and jacuzzi baths. Base yourself here for a night before heading back to the coast.

Drive back to Kyperounta and take the E909 to Chandria and onto Agros. Distance: 19km (12 miles).

6 ★★ Agros. Vineyards drop away steeply from the mountain roads in

the Pitsilia region, which incorporates some 40 mountain villages and hamlets. You'll also be driving through apple, almond, walnut and cherry orchards and, incongruously, rose gardens by now as you approach Agros, a big village sprawled across a natural amphitheatre in the hillside and a hive of activity, producing honey, rose water, wine and preserves. There's a week-long rose festival in May to coincide with the rose harvest when the air is heavy with the scent of the half a million flowers that are picked here at dawn.

Agros has many cottage industries from which the visitor can benefit. This is the place to buy rosewater, rose essential oil, even rose brandy and rose liqueur to take home. Salty halloumi cheese is made in the village as well as pork products—spicy sausages, *hiromeri* (smoked ham) and *lountza* (smoked pork fillet). The village has a website, www.agros.org.cy, although it's somewhat under development.

Head out of the village to the south on the E110 which will take you all the way back to Limassol, twisting and turning down through the foothills of the Troodos. Distance: 30km (19 miles). ●

Kakopetria village.

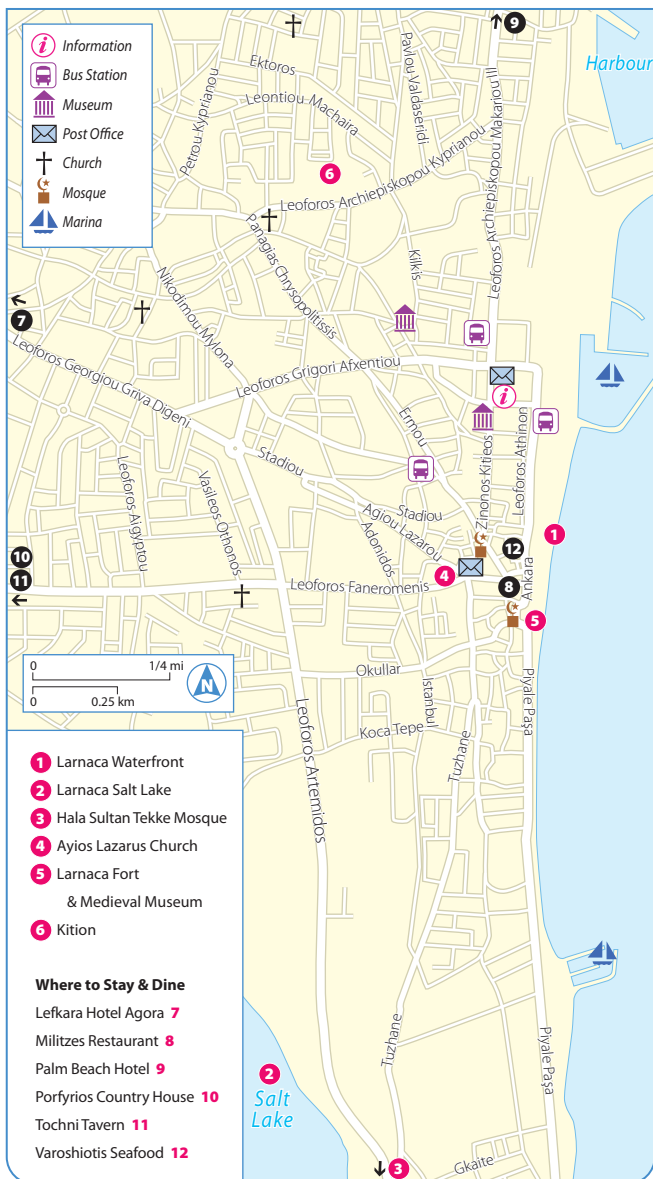


6

The Best Cities & Towns



Larnaca (Larnaka)



Previous page: Mosaic, Phaneromeni Church.

Larnaca sprawls around a wide bay and has a faintly Middle Eastern feel, dry and dusty in the summer, noisy and bustling, houses and mosques clustered close together. Although more of a working town than a resort, Larnaca has a long, attractive sea-front promenade and some fine restaurants and makes a good base from which to explore the eastern Troodos, Nicosia and the sandy beaches of nearby Ayia Napa.

1 ★ kids Larnaca Waterfront.

Larnaca's main promenade stretches for about 800m (2,625 ft.), running the length of Finikoudes Beach, which is wide, sandy and has a gently shelving seabed. The promenade itself is lined with bars, restaurants and tavernas, with an increasingly lively nightlife scene. During the day, you can hire sunbeds, umbrellas, banana boat rides or try parasailing and pedalos from the beach.

2 Larnaca Salt Lake. In winter, the salt lake to the southwest of Larnaca is colonised by thousands of flamingos arriving from as far away as Turkey and Iran, cutting a swathe of dazzling orangey-pink across the water as they feed on shrimp. The salt lake was once used for commercial salt production but is purely

decorative nowadays. The flamingos begin to depart at the end of March, the final flocks leaving as late as June.

3 ★★★ Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque.

This lonely but rather graceful mosque, which perches on the edge of the Larnaca salt lake, is regarded as one of the holiest places in the world of Islam. The mosque was founded in A.D. 647 when Umm Haram, an aunt of the Prophet Mohammed, broke her neck falling off a mule during an Arab raid on Cyprus and died. The original structure is no longer here but today's mosque stands in a little oasis of date palms and cypress on the lakeshore. You can go inside and see the sarcophagus of Umm Haram as well as the slabs of rock that marked the original grave.

Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque, Larnaca.





The 17th-century Ayios Lazarus Church.

🕒 30 min. Head out of Larnaca on the B4 and turn right along the shore of the salt lake, following the signs to the mosque. Entrance by donation. Open daily summer 7:30am–sunset, winter 9am–sunset.

4 ★★ Ayios Lazarus Church.

The original church dedicated to Lazarus dates back to the 9th century, when his remains were found on the island of Cyprus. The Bible says that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, after which he (Lazarus) was expelled by the Jews and put in a leaking boat, which was washed

up on Cyprus, where he preached the gospel and became a bishop. The current structure dates back to the 17th century. Inside, the main attractions are the elaborate icons, including one of Lazarus emerging from his tomb after resurrection, and the intricate wood carvings, notably the throne and reliquary.

🕒 30 min. Town centre, on Agiou Lazarou between the original Turkish and bazaar areas. ☎ 24 652 498. www.ayioslazaros.org. Open daily Apr–Aug 8am–12:30pm; Sept–Mar 8am–12:30pm & 2:30–5pm.

5 ★ Larnaca Fort & Medieval Museum.

Larnaca's chunky fort stands at one end of Finikoudes promenade and houses the town's small Medieval Museum exhibiting swords, daggers and German cannons. The fort was actually built as a castle by the Lusignans and adapted by the Turks in 1625 to defend the Turkish harbour. Later still, it was used as a German outpost in World War I and a prison by the British.

🕒 1 hr. Leoforos Athinon. ☎ 24 630 576. Admission 0.75€. Open June–Aug Mon–Fri 9am–7:30pm; Sept–May Mon–Fri 9am–5pm.

6 ★ Kition. Larnaca was built directly over the ancient port city of Kition, which dates back to the 13th century B.C. Sporadic excavations are carried out today but much of the site

Palm Beach Hotel, Larnaca.



was destroyed by the British, who used the 'rubble' to fill in marshes and a great deal is forever hidden beneath modern housing. You can see the remains of five temples dating back to the 13th century B.C.; the largest is a shrine that was rededicated to the

fertility goddess Astarte by the Phoenicians. ⌚ 30 min. *Take Kilkis Street from the centre and then Leontiou Machaira Street to the entrance.* Admission 1.71€. Open Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri 8am–2:30pm; Thurs 8am–5pm; Closed Sat & Sun.

Where to Stay & Dine

★ **Lefkara Hotel Agora** LEFKARA VILLAGE A small hotel in Lefkara village centre set around a leafy garden and pool, with tables in its restaurant overlooking a quiet street. There's a cosy lounge with books and PlayStation. ☎ 24 342 901. 19 rooms. From around 60€ per room per night. MC, V.

Militzes Restaurant CYPRIOT Right on the seafront, this is a typical taverna, with chequered table cloths and a laidback feel. Come here for a break from fish meze—the oven-baked stews are rich, the meat falling off the bone. *Piyale Pasha 42.* ☎ 24 655 867. Mains from around 11€. Open Mon–Sun 12:30pm–midnight. MC, V.

★★ **Palm Beach Hotel** BEACH The grande dame of Larnaca hotels, an institution to which people return year after year. The beach itself may be a thinnish strip but the gardens are shaded by a palm grove and the rooms are spacious and elegant. Go for the Garden Studio Bungalows, which have their own pool and in summer, a separate restaurant. Otherwise, there's a choice of four places to eat—I had a stupendous fish meze in the taverna here. ☎ 24 846 600. www.palmbeachhotel.com. 228 rooms. From 92.71€ per person per night. AE, DC, MC, V.

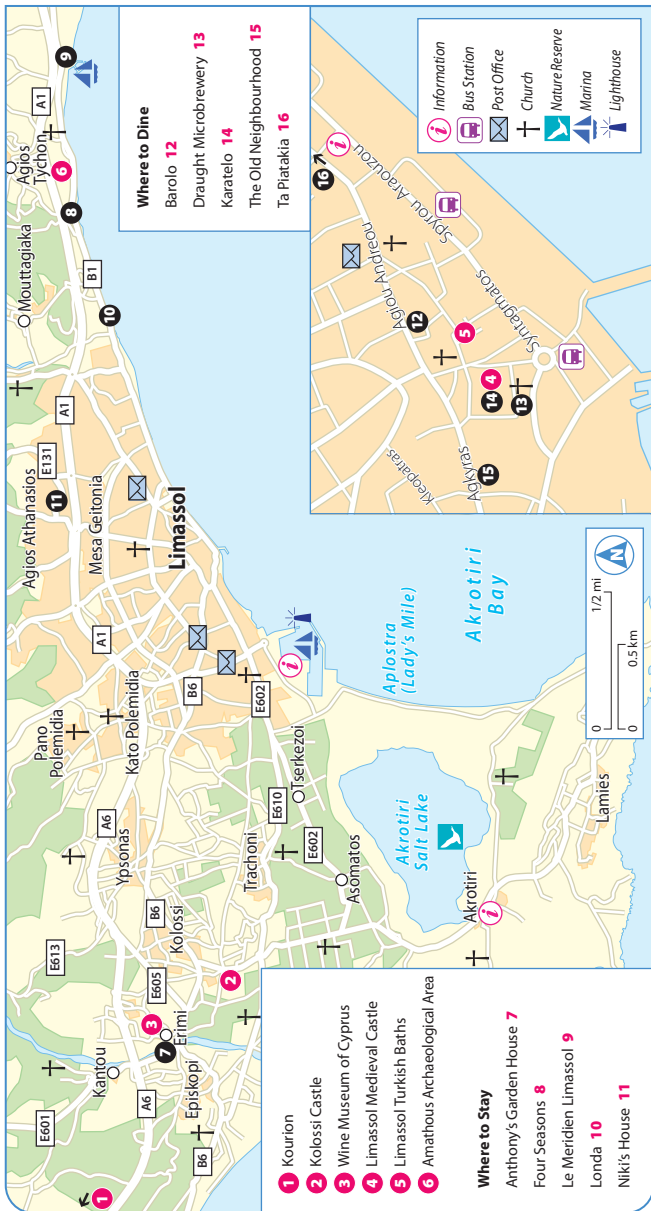
★★ **Porfyrios Country House** CHOIROKOITIA The only inn in the

village of Choirokoitia, near the Neolithic settlement, is a shining example of agrotourism success. An old stone house has been converted into six self-contained apartments, clustered around a decent-sized pool in a flower-filled courtyard. It's completely private and the interiors combine traditional features like wooden beams, stone floors, loft rooms and in one, a galleried bedroom, with modern conveniences. *Choirokoitia village.* ☎ 25 366 622. www.filokypros.com. 6 rooms, 2 interconnecting. From 60€ per studio per night. MC, V.

Tochni Tavern RUSTIC CYPRIOT Agrotourism taverna looking across the village rooftops towards the sea; try to get a table on the terrace. Food is slow-cooked according to traditional recipes, so make the most of the kebabs, *stifado* (beef stew) or *koubebia* (stuffed vine leaves). *Tochni Village.* ☎ 24 332 998. www.cyprusvillages.com.cy. Mains from around 12€. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **Varoshotis Seafood** SEA-FOOD This classy seafood restaurant offers a huge fish meze, individual fish dishes and some pasta on the extensive menu. It's right on the water and has a romantic, cosy atmosphere. *7 Piyale Pasha Street.* ☎ 24 655 865. Open daily midday–11:30pm. Advance reservations essential. AE, DC, MC, V.

Limassol (Lemesos)



The biggest port of South Cyprus, and the most populous town, Limassol is a bustling centre of commerce and tourism, and the heart of Cyprus's wine industry. You'll find classy hotels, restaurants and shopping here as well as two of the island's most important archaeological sites, Kourion and Kolossi Castle, while the sleepy wine-growing villages of the Troodos are an easy day trip away.

1 kids Kourion. Perched on a clifftop overlooking the sea to the west of Limassol, Kourion was a city-kingdom, originally settled in Neolithic times because of its strategic position, with views of the sea and surrounding countryside. The structures you can see today are from the 2nd century B.C. and later. Although the site is still being excavated, you can wander round the collection of villas with their colourful mosaics, and visit the vast amphitheatre. The original was probably smaller and was destroyed by an earthquake in the 3rd century but its replacement is awe-inspiring and is used regularly for plays, ballets and music festivals. In addition to the amphitheatre, there are three excavated houses. The **House of**

Eustolios is the most impressive, dating to the 5th century A.D., with intricate mosaics depicting gods and goddesses, birds and animals, and some fine examples of Roman baths and underfloor heating. The House of Achilles and the House of the Gladiators also have rich mosaics depicting the lives of two gladiators, Hellenikos and Margaritis.

Don't miss the 'Earthquake House', built in the second century and demolished by an earthquake in A.D. 365. Archaeologists have left it much the way it was found as a reflection of life at the time, with exhibits like the animals' drinking trough, cracked into two pieces, right next to where the family lived.

There are two other sites nearby covered by the same entrance fee.

Intricate bird mosaic in the House of Eustolios, Kourion.



Kataklysmos

The **Festival of the Flood, or Kataklysmos**, is an annual event commemorating the story of the great flood in the Old Testament. It's celebrated differently from town to town but Limassol's party is the wildest. Taking place on Pentecost, 50 days after Greek Easter, Kataklysmos starts with a procession through town to the sea in which people throw water on each other, perhaps to commemorate the birth of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, or to remember the great flood. All over town, there's singing, dancing, funfairs, food stalls and, most importantly, water-themed events, from swimming races to regattas.

The **Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis**, which dates from the 8th century B.C. through the Hellenistic period to the Roman period, is 3km (2 miles) from Kourion. This ancient site was originally used for tree worship (Ylatis means 'of the woods' and Apollo was the god of the forest). Graceful Roman columns rise incongruously from unkempt shrubbery and rubble, the whole structure another

Roman columns at the Sanctuary of Apollo Ylatis.



victim of the great earthquake of A.D. 365. A short drive or 500m (1,640 ft.) walk away are the just-discernible remains of a vast athletics stadium that would have seated 6,000, also dating to the 2nd century A.D. 🕒 **2 hr. 13km (8 miles) west of Limassol on the B6. Admission 1.71€. Open Nov–Mar 8am–5pm; Apr–May & Sept–Oct 8am–6pm; June–Aug 8am–7:30pm.**

2 ★★ **Kids** Kolossi Castle.

Kolossi is more of a fortified tower than a 'real' castle, and is one of the last reminders of the occupation of the island by the Knights Hospitaller.

In 1210, the land on which Kolossi stands was given to the Knights by the Lusignan king, Hugh I, and in 1218 they moved to Cyprus from Acre in Israel after being defeated in the final crusade. Nearly a century later, in 1310, the Knights relocated again, to Rhodes, but Kolossi was now rich and they kept it going for its wine production. It's from here that the Commandaria wine originates (Kolossi was known as a commandary) and you'll see the label for sale still all over the island.

It is believed that the original structure was destroyed in around 1425 and the current fortification built over the ruins by Grand

Commander Louis de Magnac, in the mid-15th century. His coat of arms is visible on the castle's eastern wall. The castle also produced sugar cane and the ruins to the east are of an old cane refinery. 🕒 **30 min.** **11km (7 miles) west of Limassol.** www.limassolmunicipal.com.cy. Admission 1.71€, free parking on site. Open daily Nov–Mar 8am–5pm; Apr–May & Sept–Oct 8am–6pm; June–Aug 8am–7:30pm.

3 ★★ Wine Museum of Cyprus. Carry on heading west from Kolossi to the village of Erimi, the beginning of the island's most significant wine-growing area. The Wine Museum of Cyprus is housed in a traditional, 150-year-old stone and terracotta-tiled building that used to be an inn. The display takes the visitor through the ages of wine-growing on the island from 800 B.C. to the present day. There are plenty of ancient artefacts—glasses, mosaics, wine-making equipment, urns and huge terracotta jars, and the story is told in an audio-visual presentation. After the tour, you can taste wine from 37 different growers, with two tastings included in the entrance price. 🕒 **2 hr.** **Parking**



Kolossi Castle.

on the right as you cross the Erimi Bridge into the village. www.cypruswinemuseum.com. Entrance 3.50€ inc tasting of two wines. Open daily (except holidays) 9am–5pm.

Holy Monastery of St Nicholas of the Cats

This strangely named monastery was founded in A.D. 327 by Kalokeros, the first Byzantine governor of the island, in a lonely spot by the vast salt lake to the west of Limassol. The site was overrun with snakes and a shipment of cats was brought in to keep the numbers down. Needless to say, the cats thrived and can still be found in great numbers around the 13th-century church and the old monastery building. It's a quiet place today, tended by just four nuns and can only be viewed from the exterior as part of a walk around the salt lake.



A doorway leading to the oldest building in Limassol housing Turkish baths.

4 Limassol Medieval Castle.

Only a hint of 'old' Limassol remains, the cluster of narrow streets inland from the old port, a solid medieval castle at its centre. The castle is surrounded by a small garden dotted with ancient olive trees and overlooked by a number of outdoor restaurants.

The fort you see today was built by the Ottomans in 1590 but there

has been a castle here for much longer than this. The most famous incarnation of the structure was the one in which Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre in 1191 and crowned her Queen of England. This is long gone, the fortress having been rebuilt several times and destroyed by waves of invaders or earthquakes.

The basement of this castle contains cells and was used as a prison until as recently as 1950. Today, though, the castle houses a small Medieval Museum. It doesn't take long to look round; exhibits include gold jewellery, religious artefacts, pottery from Byzantine times, old weapons and suits of armour. You can climb up to the roof of the castle and look out over the rooftops of the town centre. 🕒 1 hr. ☎ 25 330 419. Admission 1.71€. Open Tues–Sat 9am–5pm; Sun 10am–1pm; closed Mon.

5 ★★ Limassol Turkish Baths.

I love this ancient hammam, or Turkish bath, which compared to all Limassol's fancy, modern spas is the real thing. The hammam is the oldest building in Limassol, dating back to Byzantine times, and you can still see the original shapes of the windows and an Arabic inscription above the door. You can get a

Shopping in Limassol

Limassol's shops are spread along Anexartiatis and Agiou Andreou (St Andrew) Streets and Makarios III Avenue, which encircles the centre of town. All the usual international brands are represented, but local talent is more interesting. Check out the floaty, sequinned eveningwear, spangled tops and pretty trousers in Mitsu Mitsu on St Andrew Street and the intricate handmade jewellery from local designer Tonia Theodorou at 30 Agora Anexartias. Theodorou trained in Florence and specialises in quirky, unusual designs, some contemporary, some classical.

sauna, massage and scrub down for around 10€, in a mixed session.

🕒 **2 hr.** *Loutron 3, Limassol centre.*
Open daily from 2–10pm.

6 Amathous Archaeological Area. About 10km (6 miles) east of Limassol in the middle of the Amathous tourist area, Amathous is still under excavation. According to mythology, the city-kingdom was founded by King Kinyras and was where Theseus left the pregnant Ariadne to be cared for after his battle with the Minotaur. The first evidence of human settlement can be dated at around 1100 B.C., and Amathous was without doubt a flourishing city, but over the centuries, Persians, Ptolemies, Romans and Byzantines chipped away at it, assisted by regular earthquakes, until it was finally destroyed and abandoned in the 7th century A.D.

What's been excavated so far includes the Agora, an early Christian basilica, a sanctuary to Aphrodite, and the ancient harbour, now below sea level. 🕒 **30 min.** *On the main coast road west out of*



Amathous is still under excavation.

Limassol, before the Atlantica Bay Hotel. Admission 1.71€. Open daily Nov–Mar 8am–5pm; Apr–May & Sept–Oct 8am–6pm; June–Aug 8am–7:30pm.

Where to Stay

★ **Anthony's Garden House**
EPISKOPHI SUBURB A pretty, two-storey house in the village of Episkopi, about 15km (9½ miles) away from downtown Limassol. The house used to be a stable for camels but now has eight rooms on the ground floor and a studio upstairs with views towards the sea. There's a courtyard filled with flowering trees and lots of original features, including wood-beamed ceilings and stone arches. Kourion Beach is only 3km (2 miles) away and there are shops and tavernas in the village.
30 Makariou Street, Episkopi. ☎ **25 932 502.** www.agrotourism.com.cy.

9 rooms. From 52€ per room per night w/breakfast. MC, V if you book online. Closed Dec–Feb.

★★★ **Four Seasons** AMATHOUS AREA Stylish five-star property for couples or families. Landscaped gardens slope down to a spotless Blue Flag Beach and the hotel has its own diving school. Check out the Shiseido spa and six restaurants, from gourmet Greek to Chinese, Italian and seafood, as well as lavish theme nights with entertainment round the pool. **Agios Tychonas** on the main coast road heading east from Limassol. ☎ **25 858 000.**



Le Meridien Limassol Spa & Resort.

www.fourseasons.com.cy. 304 rooms. From 103€ per room per night w/breakfast in winter. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ **Le Meridien Limassol**
AMATHOUS AREA Le Meridien is located on the Amathous strip, some 15km (9½ miles) from the town centre, but easily connected to the old town by bus. Rooms come in several different categories, one of which, the Royal Spa Wing, is adults only; otherwise, this is a very popular family hotel. The lagoon-shaped pool is set in acres of grassy gardens leading down to a sandy beach with watersports. The hotel also has a superb thalassotherapy spa with treatments by Thalgo and Elemis and a series of indoor and outdoor saltwater thalassotherapy pools. Le Meridien has several restaurants, including seafood, Italian and Asian. Le Nautille is posh Mediterranean while Le Vieux Village (summer only) is an authentic-feeling taverna. *Old Limassol–Nicosia Road (at the far end of the coast road leading east from Limassol centre).* ☎ 25 862 000. www.starwoodhotels.com. 329 rooms. From 92€ per room per night w/breakfast in winter to anything around 290€ in summer. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ **Londa LIMASSOL WATERFRONT** Limassol's first true boutique hotel and a super-chic gathering place for the town's beautiful people who hang out in the cavernous lobby lounge bar, all white and neutral tones. Clever use of glass creates the feeling of the whole space being open to the sea. Rooms are both minimalist and sumptuous. *72 George A Street, Potamos Yermasoyias.* ☎ 25 865 555. www.londacyprus.com. 68 rooms. From 109€ per room per night w/breakfast, increasing in summer to more than 160€. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ **Niki's House MESA GEITONIA SUBURB** One of a couple of agrotourism projects in the suburbs, this is a 120-year-old stone farmhouse with just five rooms, in the village/suburb of Agios Athanasios. The village is only 3km (2 miles) northeast of the city and has views right across the rooftops towards the sea. The house itself is a listed building, refurbished in 2006 and situated in the middle of the village. There's a paved yard and grassy area in the centre, and a fireplace. *Rodou 18, Mesa Geitonias, Limassol.* ☎ 25 888 000. www.agratourism.com.cy. 4 studios & 1 apartment. From 48€ per studio per night, self-catering. MC, V if you book online.

Where to Dine

★ **Barolo** LIMASSOL CENTRE MOD-ERN CYPRIOT Small and unpretentious, this restaurant serves classy and adventurous Cypriot dishes with an unusual twist. Try the foie gras in Grappa, or quail, or baked mozzarella in pumpkin seeds for a change from the usual meze. 248 Ayiou Andreou, Limassol. ☎ 25 760 767. Mains from around 12.82€. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7–11pm.

★ **Draught Microbrewery** BY LIMASSOL CASTLE INTERNATIONAL As the name suggests, a microbrewery, the only one in Cyprus. You can have a full meal or snacks in the bar—the food is unchallenging Tex-Mex, burgers and little infusions of Greek (salads, chops, pork marinated in beer, ostrich fillet). Great for a quick lunch stop after visiting the castle. *Lanitis Carob Mill, Vasilissis (behind the castle in the old town).* ☎ 25 820 470. Mains 10€–30€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch, dinner & snacks. Open 11am–2am.

★ **Karatelo** BY LIMASSOL CASTLE CYPRIOT You can design your own meze in this busy, casual restaurant; simply tick the boxes on the menu, which has a wide range of hot and cold meze starters. Specials include

rabbit and moussaka, meat or vegetarian. There's live Cypriot music here in the evenings. *Lanitis Carob Mill, Vasilissis (behind the castle in the old town).* ☎ 25 820 464. www.carobmill-restaurants.com. Mains from 9.50€. AE, DC, MC, V. Dinner only, 7–11pm.

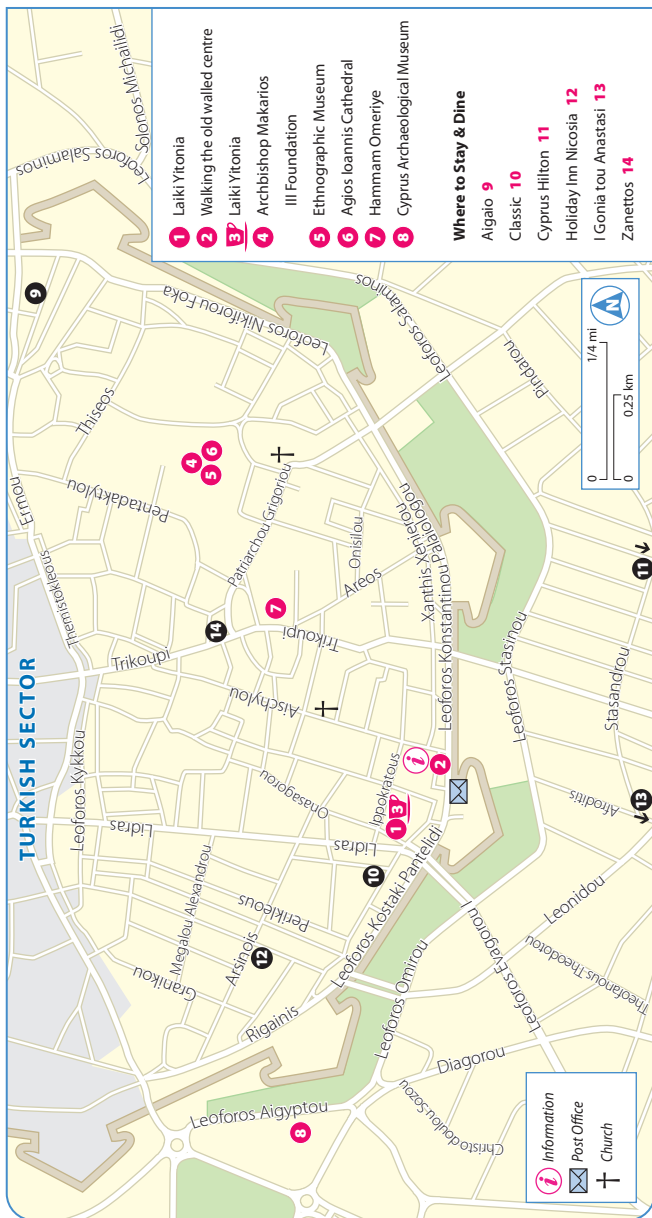
★★ **The Old Neighbourhood** LIMASSOL OLD TOWN SEAFOOD Authentic fish taverna, friendly and packed in the evenings, with live music. There's nothing unusual about the menu but it's fresh, simply prepared and delicious—try kal-amari stuffed with feta cheese, tomato and oregano. *Angyras 14.* ☎ 25 376 082. Mains from 17.50€. AE, DC, MC, V. Open daily from 6pm.

★★ **Ta Piatakia** LIMASSOL CENTRE MODERN CYPRIOT Quirky little restaurant festooned with plates, on the walls, hanging from the ceiling (the name means 'little plates'), with exciting and highly imaginative food. Chef/owner Roddy serves small dishes using Cypriot cuisine with a twist—bacon-wrapped feta, baked cherry tomatoes in a sweet and sour herb dressing and feta with duck. *Nicodemou Mylona 7.* ☎ 25 745 017. Small dishes 2€–12€. DC, MC, V. Open Mon–Sat 7–11:30pm.

Dining by the medieval castle.



Nicosia (Lefkosa)



The Cypriot capital has a rich cultural heritage and some excellent museums. The old centre, encircled by massive, 16th-century ramparts, is easily walkable and contains most of the major sights, not to mention some fine restaurants. Many visitors pay a visit to the Turkish-occupied north, a world of Muslim culture, Turkish coffee shops and fine Ottoman and Lusignan architecture.

1 ★ kids Laiki Yitonia. Laiki Yitonia means 'the neighbourhood of the people' and every big town in Cyprus has one. In Nicosia, the Laiki Yitonia, which starts just behind Plateia Eleftherias (Plateia means 'square'), is very small, only 10 minutes or so to traverse, but it's the place to go for lunch or a drink. Tavernas and restaurants nestle in a tangle of pedestrianised streets and old houses, and you'll find plenty of souvenir shops here, as well as craft workshops and artists' studios.

Travel Tip

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation offers two guided tours, both free, on Fridays, starting from the CTO office in Laiki Yitonia at 10am. Old Lefkosia concentrates on the area inside the walls while Lefkosia **Outside the Walls** extends a bit further and includes some bus transport. ☎ 22 674 264.

2 Walking the old walled centre. I love just losing myself in Nicosia's old centre; it's possible to spend all day exploring the tiny backstreets and there's always somebody happy to have a chat. For a more structured approach, though, drive into the old town via Plateia Arkiepiskopou Makariou II, turn left and park in the first car park you see on the ramparts. Turn left out of the car park and walk along the walls to the Cyprus Tourism Organisation's information booth on Praxippou and stop to pick up a free map.

Turn up Lidras (also called Ledra) Street, walking away from the ramparts. This busy pedestrianised street is the main shopping boulevard of the old town. At the end is the pedestrian crossing into the north of the city. You'll need a passport to cross, after leaving the Greek side and walking through a bleak, barricaded no-man's land. You'll see Turkish flags fluttering in the breeze on the other side, and coloured umbrellas advertising Turkish Efes beer.

Walk back down Lidra and turn left onto Nikokleous to admire the fine **Faneromeni Church**, its exterior façade adorned with glittering mosaics. Now work your way east towards Plateia Arkiepiskopou Agiou Ionannou, where you'll arrive at a complex of grand buildings

Souvenirs for sale in Laiki Yitonia.





Glittering mosaic, Faneromeni Church.

encompassing the National Struggle Museum, the Folk Art Museum, the Makarios Cultural Centre, the Archbishopric of Cyprus and the Cathedral of St John.

Turn down Adamantiou Korai to the striking National Liberty Monument on the ramparts, commemorating the Cypriots' struggle for independence from Britain between 1955 and 1959. The monument

depicts figures of 14 EOKA fighters being released from prison in 1959, watched by peasants and priests and overlooked by the Statue of Liberty.

3★ Laiki Yitonia. From the monument walk west along the ramparts and turn north along Aischylou, the beginning of the pedestrian-only Laiki Yitonia, for lunch or a cooling drink under the shade of a vine. \$.

4★★ Archbishop Makarios III Foundation. The Makarios III Foundation is a complex of galleries and museums showcasing temporary exhibitions and a permanent collection of work from various eras of the island's history.

There's a Western Europe section (15th to 19th centuries) with mainly religious and mythological themes as well as portraits and landscapes by Sebastiano del Piombo, Francesco Vanni, Nicolas Poussin, Theodore Gericault, Tintoretto and Eugene Delacroix. A second gallery houses Greek military art, engravings and maps, while a third is dedicated to Greek paintings from 1830 to the present day. There's a further section housing contemporary Cypriot art.

The Green Line Split

The term 'Green Line' refers to the line that effectively splits the island in two, between the Turkish-occupied north and the Greek south. The name comes from a humble green pencil with which Major-General Peter Young marked a cease-fire line on a map of Nicosia during hostilities in 1964. Since the 1974 Turkish invasion it has actually separated the city. It's a strange phenomenon, (reminiscent of old Berlin for anybody who's been there prior to the Wall coming down). Streets come to an abrupt end with sheet metal, coiled wire, watchtowers and police blocking off the road.

Nicosia's Walls

Encircling the old city, the walls built by the Venetians were fortified by 11 heart-shaped bastions and protected by a deep moat. The entrances to the old city are named after other cities on the island in whose direction they face, hence the Paphos Gate, Famagusta Gate and so on. The Venetian walls actually replace an even older structure built by the Franks in the 14th century; the Venetians demolished them as they were too weak, too big for the Venetian army to man and too close to the hills in which the enemy might have been lurking.

The Byzantine Art Museum in the same complex has a collection of some 220 icons, the most comprehensive in Cyprus, spanning hundreds of years from the 5th to the 19th centuries. 🕒 2 hr. *Plateia Archiepiskopou Kyprianou*.

☎ 22 430 008. Open Mon–Sat 8:30am–1pm & 3–5:30pm; closed Wed & Sat pm.

5 **Ethnographic Museum.** A small museum in the old Archbishopric housing a collection of 19th- and early 20th-century Cypriot folk art including wood carvings, tapestry, embroidery, pottery, national costumes and hand-woven materials. The quality of the workmanship is amazing; you won't want to buy second-rate tat from souvenir stalls after visiting. 🕒 1 hr. *Plateia Archiepiskopou Kyprianou (within the old Archbishopric)*. Admission 1.71€. Open Mon–Fri 9:30am–4pm.

6 ★ Agios Ioannis Cathedral.

Near the Archbishop's Palace, Agios Ioannis, the city's official cathedral, is built on the site of the 14th-century chapel of the Benedictine Abbey of

Agios Ioannis the Evangelist of Bibi. The cathedral itself is not huge (the Ottomans ruled that Christian buildings of worship were kept small and modest) but the interior is impressive: a riot of intricately carved woodwork coated in gold leaf, lit by crystal chandeliers. The four large icons are by Cretan John Kornaris and were painted between 1795 and 1797. It's in this cathedral that new archbishops of Nicosia are consecrated. 🕒 1 hr. Open Mon–Fri 8am–midday, 2–4pm; Sunday 8am–midday and during Mass.

Bust of Archbishop Makarios III outside the Cultural Centre.





Agios Ioannis Cathedral, near the Archbishop's Palace.

7 Hammam Omeriye. The Omeriye Hammam (Turkish bath) is in the old town, next to the Omeriye Mosque and not far from the Archbishop's Palace. The hammam was built in 1570 as a gift to the city from Lala Mustafa Pasha after the island fell to the Ottomans. As well as the traditional steam rooms, the

hammam offers hot stone massage, aromatherapy in an atmospheric setting of vaulted ceilings and ancient walls. ⌚ 2 hr. *Tyllirias Square 8.* www.hamambaths.com. *Open Mon 9am–9pm (couples only); Tues, Thurs & Sat 9am–9pm (men only); Wed, Fri & Sun 9am–9pm (women only).*

8 Cyprus Archaeological Museum. Just outside the Paphos Gate of the old city is the island's finest archaeological collection, housing an impressive collection of artefacts from prehistoric Cyprus to the early Christian period. Pottery, jewellery, sculptures, statues and coins are all on display, highlights being the famous Aphrodite of Soloi statue, an emblem for the island. There's also an amazing set of 2,000 terracotta figures from Agia Irini in the north, believed to date back to the 6th or 7th century B.C. and to have been created by a tribe embracing a fertility cult. You'll also see lavish gold jewellery and a display of the island's mining heritage. ⌚ 2 hr. *Mouseiou 1. Admission 3.42€.* *Open Tues, Wed & Fri 8am–4pm; Thurs 8am–5pm; Sat 9am–4pm; Sun 10am–1pm.*

Shopping in Nicosia

Nicosia has a decent array of designer clothing shops and is particularly good for shoe shopping but for a better souvenir of Cyprus, visit **Chrysaliniotissa Crafts Centre** on Dimonaktos 2 (☎ 22 348 050). It's a cluster of workshops around a courtyard in the style of an old-fashioned inn, housing some talented craftsmen and women; you can buy stunning icons here, painted by Taliadorou Kalliopi, one of Cyprus's leading iconographers. For authentic Cypriot food, try Anemoessa (23 Pindarou Street, www.anemoessa.com.cy). You'll find island honey, jams, sweets, olive oils, dried fruits, quince, grapes, figs, all beautifully packaged.

Where to Stay & Dine

★ **Aigaio** OLD CITY CYPRIOT/GREEK

Local institution in old Nicosia producing a fine meze which is very popular with locals. Good, friendly service and a mix of Cypriot and Greek dishes. **Ektoros 40.** ☎ 22 433 297. *Meze from 17€.* MC, V. *Open daily 7pm–midnight.*

★★ **Classic** CENTRE A new, minimalist boutique hotel located within the city walls. There's all-day dining in the lobby bar and a more formal restaurant, the curiously named 59 Knives, although the hotel is only 10 minutes' walk from Laiki Yitonia. **7 Regaena Street.** ☎ 22 664 006. www.classic.com.cy. 57 rooms. *From 97€ per room per night w/breakfast.* AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ **Cyprus Hilton** CENTRE The only five-star resort hotel in Nicosia, with a spacious pool area and gardens, situated in the business district on the main road into the city, about half a mile from the ramparts. You'll find the usual Hilton look and feel, including a spa and four restaurants. **Arch. Makarios III Avenue.** ☎ 22 377 777. www.hilton.com. 298 rooms. *From 321€ per room.* AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Holiday Inn Nicosia** CENTRE One of the city's busiest business

hotels, conveniently located inside the old city. There's an indoor pool and spa and several restaurants, including a Japanese one and fast sushi bar on the ground floor and the very romantic Marco Polo on the roof (summer only) where you eat al fresco with views across the old city. **70 Regaena Street.** ☎ 22 712 712. www.ichotelsgroup.com. 140 rooms. *From 294€ per room per night w/breakfast.* AE, DC, MC, V.

★ **I Gonia tou Anastasi** TSERI VILLAGE TRADITIONAL CYPRIOT Authentic Cypriot village restaurant, 10km (6 miles) from Nicosia, serving meze, awarded a Vakhis certificate for its use of local ingredients and slow cooking. **Avenue Archbishop Makarios III, Tseri.** ☎ 22 384 884. *Mains from 15€.* MC, V. *Open Mon–Sat 7:30–10:30pm.*

★★ **Zanettos** OLD CITY CYPRIOT One of the oldest tavernas on the island, established in 1938 and still going strong in the heart of the old city. There are some adventurous dishes like snails but plenty for the more conservative palate in a huge and impressive meze. **Trikoupi 65.** ☎ 22 765 501. www.zanettos.com. *Meze around 17€.* MC, V. *Open daily 8pm–midnight.*

Sushi bar at Holiday Inn Nicosia.



Paphos (Pafos)



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- 2 Tombs of the Kings
- 3 Paphos Medieval Fortress
- 4 Paphos Byzantine Museum
- 5 Paphos Harbour
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- 7 Akamas Peninsula
- 8 Agios Georgios
- 9 Oleastro Olive Park
- 10^o Oleastro Olive Park Cafe

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One of the island's busiest resorts as well as a thriving town, Paphos lies to the far west of Cyprus where rolling hills flatten out onto a broad coastal plain with a string of sandy beaches. Use Paphos as a base from which to explore impressive antiquities as well as the wild, untamed coast to the north, the western flanks of the Troodos Mountains and the quieter beaches of Pissouri to the east.

1 ★★★ kids **Paphos Mosaics.**

Compared to Greece or Turkey, Cyprus is pretty thin on antiquities. Paphos Mosaics, located almost in the town centre, are among the island's finest antiquities. The Mosaics, along with the Tombs of the Kings, form the Paphos Archaeological Park and come under the same entry ticket. Excavations are still going on. Get here as early as you can or leave it till the end of the day as the park gets crowded with day trippers.

The whole site is part of Nea Pafos, which confusingly means New Paphos but actually refers to ancient Paphos, dating back to the 4th century B.C., when the city was encircled by walls. In those days, Paphos was the centre of cultural and political life in Cyprus, a golden age which lasted until the 4th century A.D., when the city was destroyed by a

massive earthquake. After this, it went into decline and Salamis in the east became the focus of the island.

The mosaics themselves are in four houses: Dionysos, Theseus, Aion and Orpheus. The House of Dionysos is the most impressive, featuring intricate, colourful designs depicting the god of wine; look for the grape symbols. Other images tell the story of Pyramos and Thisbe, or the Four Seasons. The House of Theseus, a 2nd-century home with mosaic floors, depicts the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. On the same site is the Paphos Odeion, an ancient amphitheatre which was restored in 1970 and is used today for concerts and plays. 🕒 2 hr. *In Kato Paphos, near the harbour.* ☎ 26 306 217. *Admission 3.42€. Open Nov-March 8am-5pm, April, May, Sept, Oct 8am-6pm, June-Aug 8am-9:30pm.*

Mosaics at the House of Dionysos, Paphos.



Shopping in Paphos

Paphos is a bustling holiday resort and as such seeking out the real gems takes effort. All around the harbour there are shops selling lace from the village of Lefkara, as well as leather bags, pretty ethnic sandals, designer sandals, belts and wallets. Leather is generally cheap here, as is gold jewellery. A more unusual purchase is a goatskin rug; the skins are a byproduct of the meat for which goats are raised here.

2 ★★ **kids** Tombs of the

Kings. Actual kings weren't buried in these subterranean, 4th-century A.D. rock tombs, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but rather, local dignitaries and nobles, following the Egyptian philosophy that the resting place for the dead should closely resemble a home for the living. Go at sunset for the best light as you'll have an uninterrupted view looking west across the rocky site to the sea. The seven cavernous, underground tombs have been skilfully excavated. Climb down inside and just absorb the silence. Check out number three in particular, which is supported by graceful Doric columns. Bodies were kept in the niches in the rock walls. 🕒 1 hr. On

the Paphos–Coral Bay road. ☎ 26 306 295. Admission approx 1.71€. Open daily Nov–Mar 8am–5pm, Apr, May, Sept & Oct 8am–6pm; June–Aug 8am–7:30pm. No easy disabled access due to rocky paths and steps.

3 ★ **Paphos Medieval Fortress.** The squat fortress, an impenetrable-looking block guarding the town's busy fishing and pleasure harbour, was built in the 13th century to replace an earlier castle. It's a solid square with tiny windows and a central courtyard. There's nothing inside but a brief visit finishes off a tour of the town's antiquities and can precede coffee at one of the many cafes encircling the harbour. This particular fort was

Tombs of the Kings—a UNESCO World Heritage site.





Boats lining the fishing and pleasure harbour in Paphos.

dismantled by the Venetians in 1570 so that the Ottomans, who had begun to attack the island, wouldn't be able to use it. **Admission 1.71€.** **Open daily Jun–Aug 8am–7:30pm; Apr, May, Sept & Oct 8am–6pm; Nov–Mar 8am–5pm.**

4 Paphos Byzantine Museum.

Antique icons are the main attraction of this modest museum in Pano Paphos, just off the main square; one icon dates back to the 9th century and is said to be the oldest on the island. 🕒 30 min. 5 **Andrea Ioannou.**

☎ 26 931 393. **Admission 2€, under 12s free. Open Mon–Fri 9am–3pm, Sat 9am–1pm.**

5 **kids Paphos Harbour.** The colourful harbour forms the epicentre of Paphos's social scene. People meet here for morning coffee, lunch by the fishing boats, sunset cocktails and later, dinner. The harbour is next to the Paphos Archaeological Park so it's the ideal place to finish a tour. There are tavernas, ice-cream parlours, cool chillout cafes with cane furniture and a long row of shops selling touristy nick-nacks and arty-crafty items.

6 **Boat Tours.** Blue, red and yellow fishing boats are moored in the harbour next to pleasure cruisers and a curious mix of mock pirate galleons and menacing-looking RIBs

(rigid inflatable boats) offering thrill rides and booze cruises to the nearby sea caves, where the limestone cliffs have been eroded over the millennia by sea and wind to create caverns, stacks, columns and arches, bright white against a turquoise sea. The caves served as a hiding place for pirates centuries ago. Tours also continue north along the coast to the Akamas Peninsula and take in the rusting freighter that's wrecked on the rocks just beyond the harbour, and the bird sanctuary on Geronisos Island.

7 ★★★ **kids Akamas Peninsula.**

Protected as a national park, Akamas is an uninhabited peninsula to the northwest of Paphos of scrubland, cliffs, islets, pine forest and long, sandy beaches. It is home to some of the island's rarest snakes and birds, including the endangered griffon vulture, and is the only breeding ground in the region for the leatherback and green turtle. There are jeep safaris but I find it more peaceful to explore alone, using a four-wheel-drive to bump along dirt trails to a beach or picnic ground and walk from there. You will get lost and there are no facilities but the area isn't huge and most dirt tracks lead eventually to a village on the edge of the park. Use



Greek Orthodox church in Agios Georgios.

the coastline to keep a sense of which direction you're headed in! My favourite spots are Lara Beach, site of the turtle hatchery in summer, the trails to the far north around Aphrodite's Baths and the Smigies picnic site, a serene, shaded spot in the pine forest with barbecue pits and walking trails.

From Paphos, drive north past Coral Bay and Agios Georgios to the beginning of the national park.

8 Agios Georgios. If you're driving but don't want to bump off-road across the Akamas Peninsula, at least drive up to the end of the road, to tiny Agios Georgios, where the road literally runs out and turns into dirt track. The village has the smallest of fishing harbours and a gritty little beach where you can rent a sun lounge but curiously are

not allowed to swim. A majestic-looking Greek Orthodox church oversees the very limited action around the harbour and this is a tranquil place to stop and contemplate the sea at sunset.

9 ★★ kids Oleastro Olive

Park. Situated inland from Pissouri, just beyond the unspoilt village of Anogyra, the Olive Park is a fascinating insight into olive cultivation and production and has won several environmental awards. Oleastro nestles on a rock-strewn hillside amidst an organic olive grove, the buildings' stone walls, wooden balconies and terracotta tiles reminiscent of an old Cypriot house.

Visitors learn about 60,000 years of olive cultivation and oil extraction and there are some well-preserved old wooden olive presses dotted around. The small museum illustrates all the byproducts of olive cultivation, including soap and gnarled, smoothed wood from the ancient trees. A working eco-mill is in action between mid-October and February. The gift shop has many desirable items; wooden boxes containing bottles of oil with balsamic vinegar, mountain honey, bags of herbs and even carob honey. 🕒 **2 hr. 10km (6 miles) off the A6 motorway, past the village of Anogyra.** ☎ **99 565 768.**

www.oleastro.com.cy. **Admission 2.56€, 1.71€ children. Open daily 10am–7pm.**

10' ★ Oleastro Olive Park Cafe.

This organic cafe serves Cypriot dishes with a twist, using traditional recipes and local herbs. ☎ **99 565 768. \$.**

Where to Stay & Dine

★★★ **Almyra PAPHOS** This four-star hotel attracts a glamorous set, mainly Europeans, lured by the minimalist chic, with a black slate-tiled pool, sumptuous double sun-loungers and an unusual (for Cyprus) Japanese restaurant, Notios. If you can stretch to a Kyma Suite, do. They open right onto the gardens and beach and have a private roof terrace, where dinner can be served under the stars. *Poseidon Avenue (on the main beach road east from the harbour).* ☎ 26 933 091. www.thanoshotels.com. 190 rooms. From 208€ per room per night. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Deep Blue PAPHOS SEAFOOD** A pleasant fish taverna in a quiet location near the Tombs of the Kings, with wooden tables and chairs and a cheerful blue decor. The fish meze starts with the usual

Oleastro Olive Park Cafe.



salads and dips and moves onto fresh seafood—calamari, mussels, crabs and octopus—before a main course of the catch of the day.

12 Pafias Aphrodites (Tombs of the Kings area). ☎ 26 818 015. Meze 19.65€. MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★★★ **Intercontinental Aphrodite Hills Resort PISSOURI** Ultra-luxurious, self-contained resort, surrounded by a golf course and located on a high plateau in the countryside outside Pissouri. As well as the hotel, there are swish villas dotted around the development and a village square area with restaurants and shops, including a pizzeria, taverna, Asian restaurant, pub, *ouzerie* and cafe. The hotel itself is elegantly presented, with huge rooms spread around an enticing lagoon pool, balconies facing the distant Mediterranean and gracious service. There are several restaurants, from Italian to Mediterranean and Asian fusion. I love the peace and quiet up here, as well as the Sunset Bar and the spa; it's a real escape from the bustle of the coast. *1 Aphrodite Avenue, Kouklia.* ☎ 26 829 000. www.aphroditehills.com. 290 rooms. From 242.73€ per room per night w/breakfast (although tour operator packages are a lot cheaper and include flights). AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Notios PAPHOS JAPANESE/MEDITERRANEAN** Classy and romantic Mediterranean–Japanese fusion establishment at the oh-so-chic Almyra Hotel in the centre of Paphos. Eat à la carte or book the ‘*Omakase*’ option, which means ‘trust the chef’, and take pot luck (you meet the chef beforehand to discuss your tastes, and vegetarian *Omakase* is available). *Almyra Hotel,*



There are many restaurants around the harbour area.

Poseidonos Avenue. ☎ 26 888 700. www.thanoshotels.com. Mains from 18€. AE, DC, MC, V. Open daily Apr–Oct 12:30–3:30pm (for a snack menu), 7:30–10pm.

★★ **Seven St Georges** YEROSKEPOS SUBURB ORGANIC/LOCAL CYPRIOT Character-filled tavern run by George, a mine of information on island herbs and wildlife. Everything here is homemade, or organic, or both. The herbs are grown in the garden and the never-ending meze is made up almost exclusively of local produce, including samples of the 1,950 edible

plants growing on Cyprus, from wild artichokes to mushrooms harvested from the Paphos forest. Seafood is delivered daily, meat and cheese are from local farms and George, the owner, shoots the game himself. Expect homemade bread, local olives, melt-in-the-mouth grilled halloumi cheese and a huge variety of meats, from chicken to spiced sausages and *kleftiko*, a local speciality, in which lamb is baked for a whole day in a sealed pit, making it blissfully tender. **Anthypolochagou Georgiou Savva, Yeroskepos, Paphos.**

☎ 99 655 824 or 26 963 176. www.7stgeorgestavern.com. Meze around 17.50€ with wine (there's no menu). AE, DC, MC, V. Open daily except Mon.

Vasilias Nikoklis Inn NOKOKLEIA

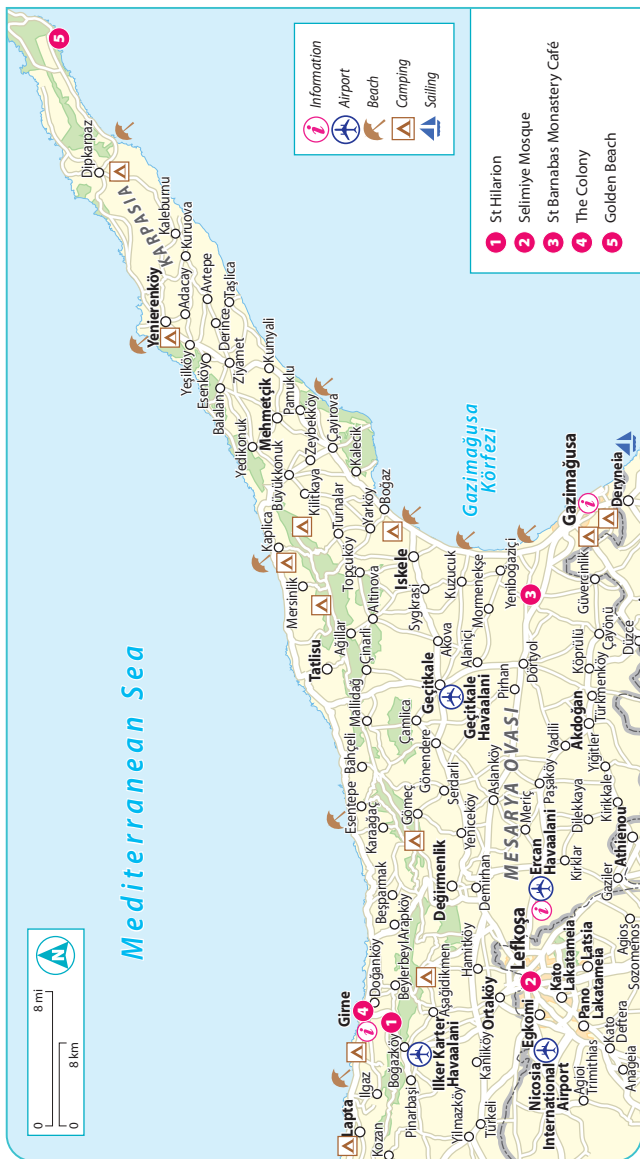
In a village 17km (10½ miles) south-east of Paphos, this historic Cypriot inn was once used by travellers and their animals on the old trading routes—there are views of the Troodos Mountains and the coast and the inn sits in a (relatively) lush river valley. There is a lush garden with a pool and lots of subtropical plants, surrounded by lemon and olive groves. This is a great area for bird-watching, too. There is a taverna attached to the property, so you don't have to stray far to eat well. Rooms sleep maximum three and some have four-poster beds.

Nokokleia. ☎ 26 432 211. www.agrotourism.com.cy. 8 rooms. From 58€ per room per night. ●

North Cyprus: **Moments & Strategies**



5 Favourite Moments



Previous page: Gulet at Escape Beach, Karaoğanoğlu.

Soaring mountains topped by medieval castles, rolling wheat fields glowing under the Mediterranean sun; olive and carob groves; the scent of pine and orange blossom; North Cyprus does have built-up areas, and strings of villas, but it also has unspoiled wildernesses in the Five Finger Mountains and Karpaz Peninsula, miles of invitingly empty beaches and towns filled with architectural surprises.

1 Sitting on the castle walls at St Hilarion, catching my breath after the steep climb, watching the play of cloud shadow across the vast blue panorama of sea and sky. *See p 133.*

2 Entering through the perfect Gothic façade of the Selimiye Mosque in Lefkoşa, slipping off my shoes and walking onto a fully fitted carpet, to take in whitewashed arches and the *mihrab* on the south wall, facing towards Mecca. There could be no more profound cultural contrast than this converted Lusignan cathedral. It's curious to walk round it barefoot. *See p 113.*

3 A conversation starts between the tables at the St Barnabas Monastery Café—everyone joins in—tourists, expats, the Turkish

Cypriots, mainland Turks, Greek Cypriots, and the London Cypriots. Tea is consumed, whilst we discuss the state of Cyprus, the world, and then go on our way smiling. *See p 148.*

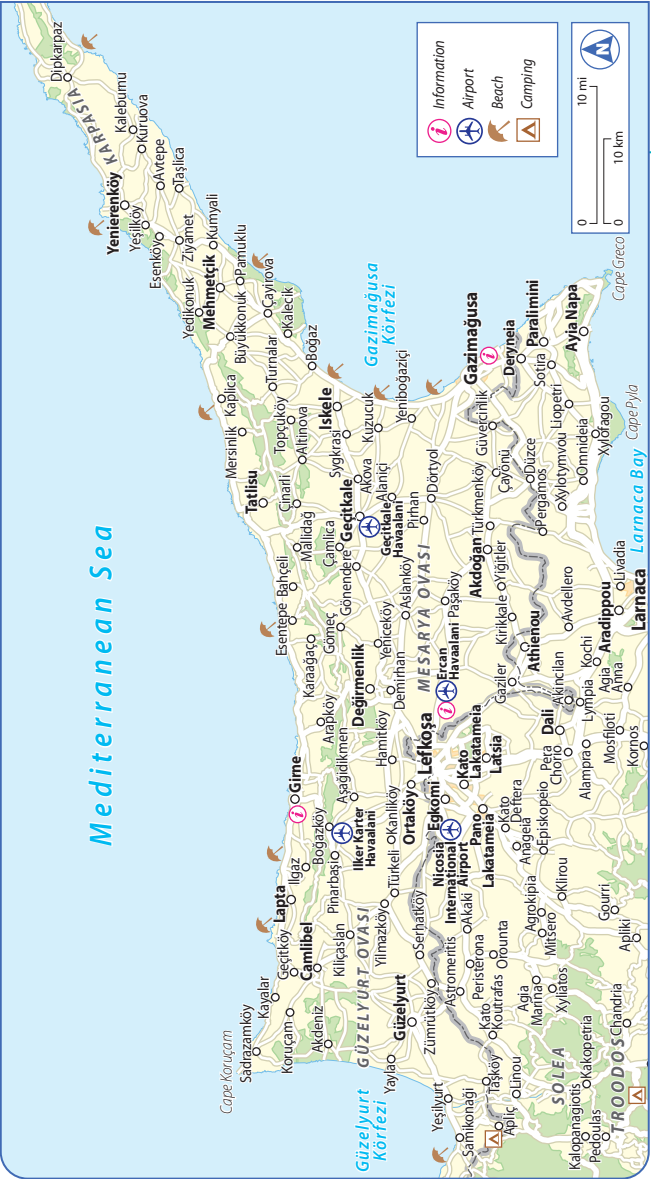
4 Cool water on a hot day. It's the simplest of pleasures, but back at my hotel after a long hot day's sightseeing, I slide into the pool. The sun is still blazing overhead, the water is cool against my skin. I feel refreshed. *See p 142.*

5 Time out on Golden Beach. Hot, soft sand between the toes, the gentle whoosh of long slow Mediterranean surf, the faint rustle of wild grass in the dunes as butterfly wings brush past, and overhead a late afternoon sun calls in the cocktail hour. *See p 95.*

Time out on Golden Beach.



Strategies for Seeing N. Cyprus



North Cyprus is a small country but it is long and thin, the roads are surprisingly slow, and getting to many sights can take a lot longer than you might expect. Most people base themselves in Girne (Kyrenia) and simply do day trips—it is easy to see the whole country this way. Consider also spending a few days in the east, either in the Gazimağusa (Famagusta) area or on the Karpaz Peninsula.

Rule #1: Pre-packaged options

Tourism in North Cyprus is still relatively unsophisticated and is almost entirely fossilised in a 1970s' style of package tour, offering hotel, plus transfers plus a variety of organised tours. These are offered by all hotels and operators and are basically the same in all cases, with coach tours to the Karpaz Peninsula, the Five Finger Mountains, Lefkoşa (Nicosia), and either a walking tour or coach trip to Girne (Kyrenia) or Gazimağusa (Famagusta), depending on where you are staying. Some hotels throw in a jeep safari as well. These are fine, but selective and won't get you off the beaten track.

Rule #2: Hiring a car

Car hire is cheap and there are many companies to choose from (see p 160). Driving is on the left and the roads, on the whole, are good, so it is easy to get around. There are speed cameras and fines are rigorously enforced so don't be tempted to put your foot down on the temptingly straight main roads. The real frustration of sightseeing by car is that to visit many places in the mountains, you need to drop back down to the main road each time as the mountain tracks between villages are only passable with a four-wheel-drive.

Flock of goats and olive trees on Morphou plains, west of Girne.



Heading South

Remember to take your passport if you want to head across the border into South Cyprus for the day. North Cypriot hire cars are not permitted to cross into the south at present, so you are limited to crossing on foot at the Nicosia or Famagusta crossings. Do not carry any duty-free alcohol or tobacco or any papers relating to property matters with you. For more, see Savvy Traveller, p 155.

Rule #3: North Cyprus time

Remember to switch off that northern angst and live Mediterranean-style. No matter how carefully researched your guide book, some monuments may still be closed when you get there, with the caretaker nowhere in sight and a heavy padlock on the door. On the other hand, the site that is never open on a Sunday may well be because the guardian doesn't have anything better to do so may as well spend the day there. We have tried to give correct opening times, but they tend to wander. Museums shut on Mondays if they have a day off.

Rule #4: Take comfortable shoes & water

Be prepared for some serious walking. The castles, in particular, often involve literally hundreds of uneven steps that are murder on the legs. The views from the top are well worth the effort, but even the fit need sturdy footwear while the less active may need a stick and plenty of time to do the climb in stages. In

high summer, plan sightseeing for early morning before the heat of the day becomes too fierce.

Rule #5: Islam & Orthodoxy

Religion sits lightly in North Cyprus, but it is nevertheless a Muslim society and basic rules of etiquette should be followed when visiting mosques. Although there's no need to cover your head, you should hide your shoulders and knees, take off your shoes and avoid disturbing people at prayer. Some of the Greek Orthodox churches are now museums, others are still used as churches and are places of pilgrimage, with people flocking north on holiday weekends to pray. Again, please respect people at prayer whilst taking photos.

Rule #6: Pace yourself

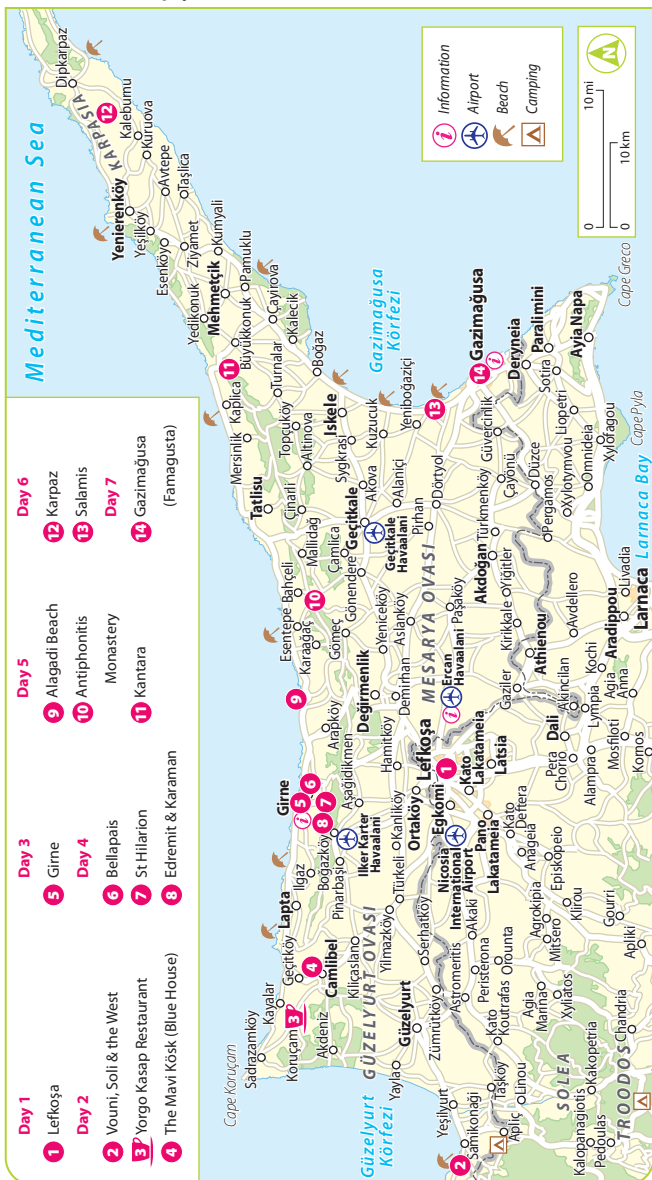
Allow yourself plenty of time to chill out; on the beach, by the pool or going for a walk in the mountains. A 2-week holiday will give you plenty of time to see most of the sights and still have time to relax. ●

7

Full-Day **Tours** in **North Cyprus**



North Cyprus in One Week



Previous page: Chain tower in Girne harbour.

North Cyprus is so small that people often stay in one place and take day trips. As an alternative, embark on a week-long circular tour of the island's highlights—from ancient Greece to the Ottomans via Byzantine basilicas and the Lusignan knights, all with a backdrop of mountain pines and a cobalt and turquoise sea.

START: Lefkoşa Gate, Lefkoşa. Trip length: 337km (209 miles).

Travel Tip

For more detailed sightseeing information, and hotel and restaurant recommendations, please see the individual sections later in the book covering Girne (see p 138), Lefkoşa (see p 150), and Gazimağusa (see p 144), the Five Finger Mountains (see p 132), Karpaz Peninsula (see p 122), and West of Girne (see p 126).

Day One

1 Lefkoşa. Begin your tour in the capital and split city of Nicosia. Most people give it a cursory once over, but for those interested in history, the United Nations Green Line is joined by the tourist office's Blue Line, a 4.5km (2.8 mile) walking tour of the old city that takes you through a maze of magnificent, if crumbling, old buildings, from the Lusignan cathedral (now a mosque) to Ottoman and British colonial mansions. Allow 3 to 4 hours, or more if you wish to see all the museums. *For detailed information on Lefkoşa (Nicosia), see p 150, Chapter 10.*

After a late lunch, take the main road west through Güzelyurt to Lefke (see p 129), arriving in time for a swim and a spectacular western sunset. Distance: 51km (32 miles).

Day Two

2 Vouni, Soli & the West.

Spend the first part of the day with the ancient Greeks and Romans at the ruins of Vouni and Soli (p 129) before heading into Güzelyurt. Visit

the museum and **Church of St Mamas**, popular patron saint of tax avoiders (p 128), then head up to the **Maronite** enclave on the **Koruçam Peninsula**, a great place for a lazy lunch and a walk beside the sea. *For more information on Vouni, Soli & the West, see p 118, Chapter 8.*

3 Yorgo Kasap Restaurant.

People flock from across the island to sample a mouthwatering array of meze and indulge in the house-special *kleftiko* on Sundays. **Koruçam.** ☎ 0392 724 2060. Closed Mon. \$.

4 ★★★ The Mavi Köşk (Blue House).

After lunch, return via **Çamlıbel** to visit the **Mavi Köşk**, the mountain home of a shadowy Italian-Greek Cypriot lawyer, Byron (Paolo) Paolides, said to have been

Swan mosaic, Soli.





Mavi Köşk in the Five Finger Mountains.

Mafia-connected and a gunrunner for Archbishop Makarios. It stands in military grounds so you will need your passport for ID. Greek Cypriots are not permitted to visit this site.

For full details, see p 133, ①.

Return to Çamlıbel and follow the main road through to the Girne area where you will stay for the next two nights. Distance: 27km (17 miles).

Day Three

⑤ Girne. Allow yourself a lazy morning. Try the **Escape Beach Club** (p 115), or **Green Heights**

Girne harbour.

Park (p 128) if you don't want to stay beside your hotel pool.

In the afternoon, head into Girne town where the castle looms over the old harbour, filled with traditional gulets (wooden boats). It's a perfect place to stroll and enjoy some gentle sightseeing, finishing up on a bar roof terrace for cocktails and then onto a feast of meze at one of the city's excellent restaurants. *For more information on Girne, see p 138, Chapter 10.*

Day Four

⑥ ★★★ Bellapais. In the Five Finger Mountains behind Girne, Bellapais is a world apart. This small village, wrapped around the medieval **Bellapais Abbey**, would be more at home in rural England than the Mediterranean. After exploring the abbey, wander up through the village to the house where writer **Lawrence Durrell** used to live. Several trees claim to be his 'tree of idleness', but the top contender is on the terrace of the cafe by the abbey. *For more information on Bellapais, see p 134, ④.*

Take the mountain-top Ridge Road signposted towards St Hilarion. It's twisty in places but





Take your time climbing up to the top of St Hilarion.

the views are superb. Stop beside the St Hilarion turnoff sign for one of the best views of the castle. Distance: 8km (5 miles).

7 ★★★ **kids** **St Hilarion.** Locals claim this to have been the inspiration for Disney's Snow White castle but whether or not it is a Hollywood star, it is a grand old lady, a vast, sprawling monster started by the Byzantines and capped off by the Lusignans. It takes some serious climbing with over 400 rough steps up to the very top, so pace yourself. For full details, see p 109, **3**.

Continue west along Ridge Road for 18km (11 miles) to Kozan (p 136) for lunch. Then take the road signposted to the Girne down to the coast. Distance: 22km (14 miles).

8 **Edremit & Karaman.** Driving back to Girne along the coast, side-track for a quick look at the village of Edremit, where the **Hello Basket Shop** is a good place for souvenir shopping, or the picture-book 'English' village of Karaman. Also stop off and look at the various monuments to the Turkish military along the coast at Karaoğlanoğlu. For more information on Edremit & Karaman, see p 127, Chapter 9.

Day Five

Head east from Girne towards the Karpaz Peninsula. The scenery along this stretch of the coast road is some of the best in the country, but the road was half-built at the time of writing and the going was slow as a result. If in a hurry, head towards Lefkoşa, turn east to Gazimağusa and take the main road onto the peninsula. Distance: 20km (12 miles).

9 **Alagadi Beach.** Along the first stretch of the coast road, stop at the **Hazreti Öram Türbesi**, 4km (2½ miles) east of Girne, the

The medieval abbey at Bellapais.





Handmade crafts for sale at the Hello Basket Shop.

waterside Muslim shrine of seven Muslim saints, companions of the Prophet Mohammed. A little further on, Alagadi Beach is one of the biggest of the public access beaches,

a broad sweep of open sand which is sadly not as clean as it could be. *For full details, see p 115, 6.*

10 Antiphonitis Monastery. Off the coast road, take the turning for **Esenetepe**, from where the road wriggles for about 8km (5 miles) through the pine forests to this elegantly rounded Byzantine church, tucked into a peaceful mountain valley. *For full details, see p 135, 6.*

11 Kantara. Allow at least an hour to drive 33km (20½ miles) along the coast to Kantara, the most easterly of the great Lusignan castles and the most accessible despite still involving a great many stairs. Towering over the Karpaz Peninsula, the views on a clear day reach as far as Turkey and Lebanon. *For more information, see p 123, Chapter 9.*

Drive south and turn left if planning to stay in Büyükkonuk (8km/5 miles), or continue south to Boğaz (18km/11 miles) where

Enjoy fantastic views over the Karpaz Peninsula from Kantara.



there are several good seafront restaurants that offer a convenient place to stop for lunch. Then follow the main road along the Karpaz Peninsula to Dipkarpaz (45km/27½ miles) or Golden Beach (66km/41 miles) for the night.

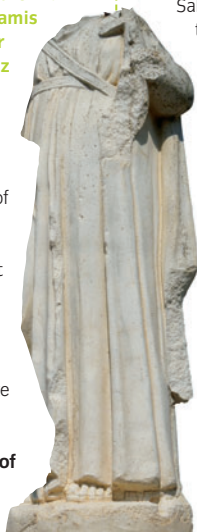
Day Six

12 Karpaz. Start your day at the far end of the Karpaz Peninsula with a visit to the **Apostolos Andreas Monastery**, a major pilgrimage site with a supposedly miraculous healing spring. From there, continue about 5km (3 miles) along the bumpy track to **Zafer Burnu** (Cape Andreas) at the far eastern tip of the island, for wide skies, remote scenery and the possibility of spotting some of the 600 or so wild donkeys that roam the area. On your way back along the peninsula, stop off at the village of **Sipahi** to see the ruined Byzantine basilica of **Ayias Trias** and the **Olive Oil Mill** near Boğaz. *For more information, see p 122, Chapter 9.*

Continue south along the main east coast road to Salamis (21km/13 miles). Either stop for lunch in Boğaz or in Salamis Bay.

13 ★★★ Salamis.

Spend the afternoon exploring the rich archaeological heritage of the Salamis Bay area, starting with Salamis itself, the most important city in Cyprus during the classical Greek era. There is a short loop of highlights or a far longer possible tour that will take 2 to 3 hours. Nearby are the **Royal Tombs**, the **Monastery and Tomb of St Barnabas**, one of the founders of the



Headless Greek statue at Salamis.



Offerings left by pilgrims inside the Apostolos Andreas Monastery.

Christian church, and **Enkomi**, the Bronze Age capital of Cyprus. *For more information, see p 147, 7.*

Day Seven

14 Gazimağusa (Famagusta).

About 7km (4½ miles) south of Salamis, Gazimağusa is the third of the major towns in North Cyprus, once a tourist haven whose hotel district was cut off in 1974 and is now an eerie ghost town. The historic centre, however, has a wealth of fascinating Lusignan, Venetian and Ottoman architecture and several decent restaurants on the main square for lunch. *For more information, see p 144, Chapter 10.*

North Cyprus in **One Day from Famagusta Crossing**



Prepare yourself for an action-packed day that takes in saints, warriors and great cities both ancient and modern, in a whirlwind tour of 2,000 years of history through some of the most unspoiled scenery in North Cyprus. There is enough to keep you entertained here for a couple of days, so consider staying overnight on the Karpaz Peninsula (see p 122). **START: Gazimağusa. Trip length: 33km (20½ miles). One to 2 days.**

1 Gazimağusa. The world's richest city in the 14th century and the playground of the eastern Mediterranean in the 20th, half of Gazimağusa was cut off in 1974 leaving it a quiet backwater, with formidable walls said to have been designed by Leonardo da Vinci. The historic centre is largely intact, if battered by centuries of warfare. Allow 2 to 3 hours for a good walk round and lunch in one of the several cafe-restaurants in the main square. *For more information, see p 144, Chapter 10.*

2 St Barnabas Monastery. Built around the tomb of St Barnabas, founder of the Cypriot church, there has been a monastery on this site since A.D. 477. The main monastery (mainly 18th century) is now an excellent little museum. The cave tomb itself is in a separate chapel. The cafe here offers basic drinks and snacks. *See p 148, 8.*

3 ★★★ Salamis. The earliest and richest capital of Cyprus during the Hellenistic period, Salamis was supposedly founded in the 12th century B.C. by Teucer, a hero of the Trojan wars. Much of it still awaits proper excavation but in the meantime, there is plenty to entertain. *For more information, see p 147, 7.*

4 Boğaz. If you haven't already had lunch, there are several traditional restaurants serving the usual, reasonably priced kebabs and fish dishes around the harbour of this small town at the entrance to the Karpaz Peninsula. A short distance out of town on the main Karpaz road,

the **Olive Oil Mill** offers tours of the factory, tastings and a shop. *For more information, see p 123, 1.*

5 Kantara. Drive through the olive groves and wheat fields to the eastern end of the **Five Finger Mountains** and **Kantara Castle**, said to be where Isaac Komnenos surrendered to Richard the Lionheart in 1191. This vast but surprisingly hidden mountain-top location is where the Lusignan knights lived in lordly luxury until the arrival of the Venetians. *For more information on Kantara Castle, see p 123, 3. Also see p 132, Chapter 9 for the Five Finger Mountains Tour.*

Check out the excellent museum at St Barnabas Monastery.



North Cyprus in One Day from Nicosia Crossing



Wear comfortable shoes when you set off to explore the heart of North Cyprus in a day. There are two speeds to this itinerary—you can rush round every sight, climb to the top of St Hilarion and feel virtuously exhausted or you can meander slowly through the highlights, admiring the views, lingering over lunch and soaking up the mellow laidback charm that is so typical of the North.

START: Lefkoşa. Trip length: 78km (48 miles).

1 Lefkoşa. Nicosia is a rough diamond of a city. Away from the coast, on the plain, it is divided by the Green Line and swollen by a mass of ugly modern buildings. In spite of that, you can still find elegant if often tatty buildings and some true architectural gems such as the **Ottoman Büyük Han**, the **Selimiye Mosque** (built as the Gothic Cathedral of Ste Sophia). *For more information on Lefkoşa, see p 150, Chapter 10.*

2 ★★★ Bellapais. About 20 minutes' drive north of Lefkoşa in the Five Finger Mountains, **Bellapais Abbey** (Abbaye de la Paix or Abbey of Peace) was founded in 1187 by Augustinian monks fleeing from Jerusalem ahead of Saladin's invading army. It is a truly peaceful spot, with fine views down to the coast, shady gardens and plenty of cafes and restaurants for a lunch stop. *For more information on Bellapais, see p 134, 4.*

3 ★★★ kids St Hilarion. Named after a 7th-century Palestinian hermit, this formidable mountain fortress began life as a Byzantine monastery and castle, captured by the Crusaders in 1191 and massively extended with the addition of sumptuous royal apartments. Built vertically up the mountain, there are three main sections: the lower bailey originally used for stabling; the middle enceinte with the gatehouse, **Byzantine chapel**, banqueting hall (and much-needed cafe); and the upper royal apartments of **Prince John's Tower**, perilously perched right at the top. *See p 133, 3.*

4 Girne. Founded by ancient Greek colonists in the 10th century B.C., Girne (Kyrenia) is undoubtedly the prettiest of the large towns in North Cyprus, in spite of the sprawl of villas and apartment blocks that have mushroomed around it over the last

The peaceful Bellapais Abbey.



The Green Line

In 1964, Major-General Peter Young took out a green pencil and drew a line across the map of Nicosia, marking where the United Nations would station troops to separate the warring Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In 1974, the line stretched out for 180km (112 miles) across the whole island to become the United Nations Buffer Zone, an area of 346 sq km. About 860 UN troops are stationed here at any given time, with significant numbers of Cypriot, Turkish and Greek forces piled up behind them. From 1974 to 2003, crossing the line was incredibly difficult, but in the last few years, tensions have eased and several border crossings have opened, some allowing only foot traffic, some for cars as well (p 160). The UN Headquarters are beside the border at the Ledra Palace Hotel in southern Nicosia, where the barbed wire, watchtowers and camouflaged machine gun posts that divide the city and the island are at their most visible.

few years. In the 7th century, a massive castle was built on the foundations of an earlier Roman fort, to protect the harbour from Arab invaders. Later, it was adopted and adapted by the Lusignans, although this castle is very different from St Hilarion and houses a fascinating **Shipwreck Museum**. Afterwards, a walk around the harbour offers a choice of cafes, many in converted carob warehouses. *For more information on Girne, see p 138, Chapter 10.*

5 Karaoğlanoğlu. It is perfectly fine to stay in Girne for the evening, but to get a real sense of being in Turkish territory, head west along the

coast road for about 5km (3 miles). This area is the North's holiday hotspot, lined by beaches and hotels, but it is also where the Turkish invasion came ashore in 1974 and there are several extremely large monuments, including the **Peace and Freedom Museum**, a monument to the Turkish dead, surrounded by captured Greek military vehicles. *For more information, see p 127, 1.*

6 Alsancak. A short distance further west, Alsancak offers a number of dinner options and a walk along the beach before you head south and back across the border. *For more information, see p 127, 4. ●*

The Peace and Freedom Museum.



8

The Best **Special-Interest** Tours



Religion in North Cyprus



Previous page: Mosaic, Ayias Trias Basilica, Karpaz.

Although North Cyprus is a Muslim country and every town and village has a mosque, some of the finest are converted Christian churches and even Gothic cathedrals. The island also has a strong Greek Orthodox tradition stretching back to Byzantine times, observed by the white-washed arches richly adorned with gilded icons and carved screens. **START: Gazimağusa.**

1 Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque, Gazimağusa. Built in the early 14th century and modelled on Reims Cathedral, this extravagant Gothic confection, once the coronation site of the kings of Jerusalem was transformed by the Ottomans in 1571 into a mosque named after the Ottoman conqueror of Cyprus. *See p 146, 3.*

2 ★★ St Barnabas Monastery, Salamis. After his death, Barnabas's body was unceremoniously dropped in a local swamp, from where it was rescued and reburied in a cave by his followers. The spot was then forgotten for several hundred years until pinpointed by the local Archbishop after a dream in A.D. 477. Excavations in 2008–9 uncovered a far larger cemetery of the same period. *See p 148, 8.*

3 ★ Apostolos Andreas Monastery, Karpaz. Ever since the Apostle Andrew, a famous miracle worker, used the spring water here to heal the sight of his ship's captain, people have been flocking here in search of further miraculous cures. A large monastic complex has built up to cater to the pilgrims, complete with a thriving market at weekends. *See p 124, 8.*

4 Hazreti Öram Türbesi. A simple, whitewashed building on the shore, this moving shrine surrounds the cave tomb of seven Islamic warriors killed during the 7th-century invasions, all of them personal companions of Prophet Mohammed, and Hazreti Öram, the sister of the prophet's wet nurse, who died falling from



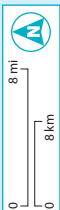
Pilgrims, Apostolos Andreas Monastery, Karpaz.

her horse during the invasion. 🕒 **15 min.** **4km (2½ miles) east of Girne, off the coast road. No phone. Admission free but donations suggested. Daily 9am–4pm.**

5 ★★★ Selimiye Mosque, Lefkoşa. Work began on the great Gothic Cathedral of Ste Sophia in 1209, taking some 150 years to complete. It was converted by the Ottomans in 1571 when the spires were decapitated and replaced by minarets, the interior whitewashed and the minbar and mihrab added to the south wall. *See p 152, 7.*

Mediterranean Sea

- Information
Airport
Beach
Camping
Sailing



Beaches are one of the biggest draws in North Cyprus, many of them shared by tourists and turtles. In addition to the free locations, you can spend time at beach clubs, open to anyone who will pay up to 20YTL a day, or 'private' beaches which are technically open to all, but with facilities operated by the hotels and only accessible to their guests. **START: Gazimağusa.**

1 Palm Beach, Gazimağusa.

The frustration here is seeing a vast crescent of gleaming white sand and being confined to the northern extremity. One of the finest beaches on the island, it fronts the ghost city of **Varósha** (p 147), overlooked by Turkish military watchtowers. There are drinks stalls and sun-loungers for hire. *Entrance is beside the Palm Beach Hotel, just south of Gazimağusa town centre. Admission free. Photography forbidden.*

Beach Clubs

2 Acapulco Holiday Resort.

Hotel, casino, aquapark and open-air disco, beach and watersports. *Çatalköy, 8km (5 miles) east of Girne.*

 0392 824 4111. www.acapulco-cyprus.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Open 24 hours.

3 Escape Beach Club. Hotel, beach, watersports, restaurant, bar and disco. *Karaoğlanoğlu, 5km (3 miles) west of Girne.*  0392 821 8330. www.escapebeachclub.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Open 9am–1am.

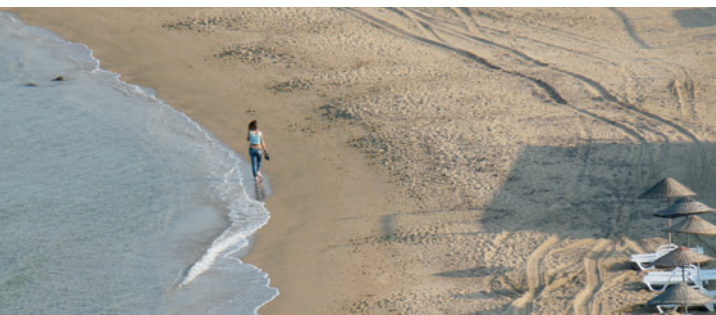
4 Salamis Bay. A broad shallow bay, Salamis Bay is fringed by miles of gently sloping, white sandy beaches. With several points, most people choose to base themselves by one of the hotels or restaurants (p 149) to make use of facilities. *7km (4½ miles) north of Gazimağusa, off the coast road. Admission free.*

5 ★★★ Golden Beach, Karpaz.

This is the longest most remote beach in North Cyprus, a rich gold swathe of sand stretching for over 5km (3 miles) along the south coast of the Karpaz Peninsula, backed by reed-covered dunes. Several beach-bar/restaurants offer chalets to those who wish to feel the magic of the wide skies at night. *18km (11 miles) east of Dikarpaz. Admission free.*

6 Alagadi Beach, Girne. The nearest large public beach to both Girne and Lefkoşa, Alagadi is popular with Cypriots so can get crowded. It sadly suffers from litter, but if you don't wish to pay, it ticks the boxes, with plenty of sand, water, a beach bar/restaurant, and easy access. *18km (11 miles) east of Girne, off the coast road. Admission free.*

The white sandy beach at Salamis Bay.



Best Activities in North Cyprus



The Mediterranean scenery could drive even the most sedentary into the arms of nature. Take in the vivid turquoise sea and tanzanite sky, spring mountainsides carpeted with flowers and the heady scent of pine and orange blossom on the breeze. It is time to get active, whether that's cycling in the mountains, learning to dive, or taking to the skies.

Golf

1 Korineum Golf & Country Club. There is only one golf course in North Cyprus, with an 18-hole course, three training holes and 30-bay driving range, tucked into gently rolling hills between the mountains and the sea. Membership is available on a temporary basis. *Esentepe, 20km (12 miles) east of Girne.* ☎ 0392 600 1500. www.korineumgolf.com. Prices from 555€ plus 760€ joining fee for holiday membership (allowing 25 rounds).

Horse riding

2 Çatalhöyük Riding Club. Head out on the trail through the mountains or canter along the beach through the surf. The stable will provide a professional guide, well-schooled horses and a picnic on request. They also run week-long riding holidays. *20 Temmuz Caddesi, Çatalhöyük, 20km (12 miles) east of Girne.* ☎ 0533 845 4742. www.catalkoyridingclub.com. Call to check prices. Also available at Kozan, see p 136.

Paragliding

3 Highline Air Tours. Feel the wind in your sail with a tandem jump

off the top of the Five Finger Mountains above Girne. *Old Harbour, Girne.* ☎ 0542 855 5672. www.highlineparagliding.com. Call to check prices.

Diving

There are about 20 excellent dive sites along the north Cyprus coast, with 30m (100 ft.) visibility, a mix of wrecks, coral reefs and the chance of diving with turtles. Local dive centres also offer PADI courses for beginners. **4 Amphora Scuba Diving Center.** *Escape Beach, Karaoğlanoğlu.* ☎ 0542 851 4924. www.amphoradiving.com. **5 Nautilus Scuba Diving School.** *Denizkızı Hotel, Alsancak.* ☎ 0392 227 3160. Call to check prices.

Hiking

There are hiking and mountain-biking trails throughout the Five Finger Mountains and the Karpaz Peninsula, linked by the 230km (143 miles) way-marked **6 Kyrenia Mountain Trail** that traverses the country from east to west. Details of trails, guides, maps and guided walks from the Kyrenia Mountain Trail Association. ☎ 0533 845 3935. www.kyreniamountaintrail.org. Call to check prices.

Orchids & Wild Flowers

There are 32 species of orchid in Cyprus of which one, the Cyprus bee orchid, *Ophrys kotschy*, is endemic, along with 96 other endemic plants. Expats Maureen and Tony Hutchinson run orchid walks from late February to early May near Girne. ☎ 0392 721 3013; www.walksnorchidsnorthcyprus.com.

The Best Special-Interest Tours



Stretching back over thousands of years, everyone from the Assyrians to the Persians and the Hittites staked a claim to Cyprus at some stage during its prehistory, most trashing their predecessors' buildings and leaving only a glimpse of the rich past. This round-up of the best of the ancients stretches from the farthest western tip of North Cyprus to its eastern shore. **START: Vuni (35km/22 miles) west of Lefkoşa.**

1 ★★★ Vuni (Vouni). On a stunning headland, miles from anywhere, sprawl the sadly flat remains of a once elegant Persian palace, built in the 5th century B.C., remodelled by the Greeks and abandoned after a fire in 380 B.C. It is a huge 137-room complex, but the ground plan begins to make sense as you stroll—and if it doesn't, there is still the astonishing view. 🕒 30–45 min. See p 129, **13**.

2 ★★ Soli. Although there had been a town here for centuries, legend claims Soli is named after the Greek philosopher, Solon, who persuaded Aepaeon King Philicypros that this gentle green hill with its sheltered harbour would be a suitable site for his capital. The main reason to visit is to see the intricate mosaic floor of the Byzantine basilica, with its swirling geometric, animal and bird designs. 🕒 1 hr. See p 129, **12**.

3 ★★★ kids Girne Castle. Girne Castle makes it onto this list because of its museums. The Tombs-Finds Gallery reconstructs a Neolithic home from Vrysi, and an early Bronze Age tomb from Krini and includes many finds from Akdeniz. Next door, is the superbly preserved wreck of a 2,300-year-old ship, displayed alongside its cargo of wine, almonds and grinding wheels. 🕒 1½ hr. See p 139, **2**.

4 ★★★ Salamis. Supposedly founded by Teucer, a homesick hero of the Trojan campaigns, who had been exiled from the Greek island of Salamis in the 12th century B.C. Salamis survived right up until the Arab invasions of the 7th century A.D. after which fragmented groups continued to live in the rubble for another 500 years until the Crusaders arrived. See p 147, **7**.

Wander the ancient ruins at Salamis.



Liquid Gold

The olive tree (*Olea europaea*) was first introduced to Cyprus in around 6000 B.C. By 4000 B.C., its oil was being used as a fuel for the copper-smelting furnaces. Two thousand years later, it was being farmed intensively and traded across the Hellenistic world as both a food and ointment which was believed to offer youth and strength. By 900 B.C. the trade in olive oil was so important, Homer wrote of it as 'liquid gold'. The island's oldest living trees are around 1,000 years old. Olive Tree Protection and Research Association. www.zakad.org.

5 ★ Royal Tombs, Salamis. No one really knows whether these rich chariot burials were royal tombs or simply wealthy aristocrats. What is clear is that they were powerful people who expected to go to the after-life fully kitted out with servants, horses and a full set of possessions, including transport. The agony of the horses' sacrifice is evident in their twisted skeletons. 🕒 1 hr. See p 148, 10.

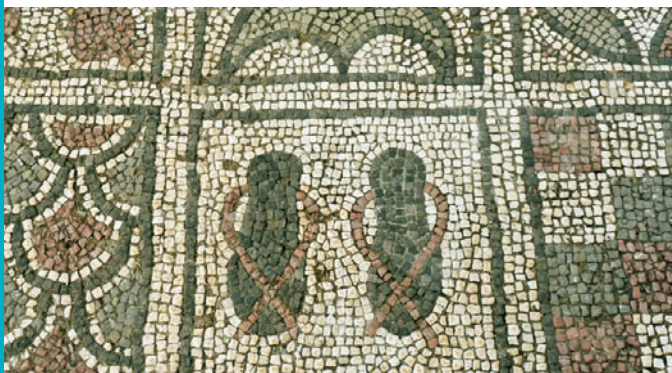
6 Enkomi. Capital of Alassia (Copper Age Cyprus), Enkomi thrived on trading copper for nearly 900 years (2000–1100 B.C.) with a population of nearly 15,000 under the Mycenaeans. Today, the site has been neglected and can be rather confusing, but if you look carefully, you can begin to

decipher the layout of streets and houses, find wells, grinding wheels, tombs, and a stone altar with Minoan bull's horns. Watch where you put hands and feet, the place is crawling with wildlife, from lizards to snakes.

Take the T-junction just south of St Barnabas Monastery and follow the signs. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–7pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm.

7 Ayias Trias Basilica, Karpaz. Now ruined, the 6th-century basilica stands forlorn, wild flowers growing up between the cracks in the mosaic pavements. Notice the mosaic pilgrim sandals that look like rubber flip-flops in the designs. 🕒 20 min. *Sipahi. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Open daily 8am–4pm.* ●

Mosaic of sandals in the Ayias Trias Basilica, Karpaz.



9

The Best **Regional** Tours



The Karpaz Peninsula



The panhandle that sticks out of the northeastern corner of Cyprus towards Turkey and Syria—the Karpaz Peninsula is a remote area of olive groves and rolling wheat fields, sand dunes and tiny villages where some 800 long-legged wild donkeys graze, and butterflies flit amongst the wildflowers. This is the country at its most unspoiled and idyllic. **START: iskele (21km/13 miles) north of Gazimağusa). Trip length: 130km (80 miles).**

1 iskele/Boğaz. Officially separate towns, İskele and Boğaz form a ribbon of development at the southern entrance to the Karpaz Peninsula lined by a string of waterfront restaurants and hotels. Nearby Bufra is a very large building site as development continues. There is only one sight in the area, a small **icon museum** in the former 12th-century Byzantine church of Panayia Theodoku (Trikomo). **Icon Museum** ⌚ 15 min. *Ecebit Caddesi, Yeni Iskele. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–5pm, winter 9am–6pm.*

2 Olive Oil Mill. Olive oil has been crucial to Cyprus since the Neolithic period (p 120) but this modern mill processes the fruit of its own 10,000 trees for oil and soap, turning the pips and skin into fire bricks. It also processes the island's other traditional cash crop, carob, used to make a sweet black molasses called *pekmez* (said to be an aphrodisiac). The mill offers tours, a shop and cafe.

⌚ 45 min. *Karpaz Road, 3km (2 miles) from Boğaz.* ☎ 0392 383 2411/2. *Admission free. Mon–Sat 8am–5pm.*

3 ★★★ Kantara Castle. Built on a knife-edge pinnacle at the far eastern end of the Five Finger Mountains, this sturdy Lusignan fortress began life in the 10th century as an observation tower. It was perfectly sited with views to Turkey and Lebanon. Although it's the lowest of the three castles at 745m (2,444 ft.), it's still a steep climb up from the car park. Climb the outer enceinte to the inner ward, where you'll find a large tower, dungeon and barracks. Beyond this, in the inner bailey, lie the northern towers, angled to communicate (using flares) to Buffavento over to the east. The topmost tower is said to be haunted by the ghost of a long dead queen. See also p 104. ⌚ 2 hr. *42km (26 miles) north of Gazimağusa. No phone. Admission 7YTL. Daily 9am–6pm.*

Fishing boats in Boğaz harbour.



Turtles

Loggerhead and green turtles both nest on several North Cyprus beaches, each female laying up to 100 eggs in a nest some 40cm (16in) deep. Only one in 1,000 will survive to adulthood. The nests are carefully monitored and protected and while you can watch the hatching (May–Oct), lights are banned as they confuse the babies on their path to the sea.

- 4 Sipahi/Yenierenköy.** The two villages are social anomalies in the politically divided world of Cyprus. Sipahi is one of the only places where Greeks and Cypriots still live side by side, with some 600 Greeks remaining supported by UN food aid, their houses painted different colours to distinguish them. Yenierenköy has a number of refugees from the southern enclave of Erenköy along with a number of blond Bulgarian Turks. The main reason for stopping is to visit the ruined Byzantine **Ayias Trias Basilica** (p 120) with its 5th to 6th century A.D. mosaics, including a pair of pilgrim sandals, inlaid into the paving. 🕒 20 min. *Sipahi. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily 8am–4pm.*

The Olive Oil Mill also processes carob beans.



- 5 Moon over the Water.** This English-owned waterfront restaurant is renowned for its traditional English Sunday roasts. *Iskele.* ☎ 0392 371 3297. *AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri evenings, Sat–Sun lunch & dinner. \$\$.*

- 6 Büyükkonuk.** Under the energetic leadership of Ismail and Lois Cemal, a Cypriot-Australian couple who settled here and opened a local B & B, this village is turning itself 'eco', with a traditional olive oil press, craft shop, around 50km (30 miles) of walking trails, annual craft festivals in May and October, and cheese and bread-making demonstrations. ☎ 0542 850 5758. www.ecotourismcyprus.org.

- 7 ★★★ Golden Beach, Karpaz.** See p 115.

- 8 ★ Apostolos Andreas Monastery.** Ever since the Apostle Andrew was said to have created a miraculous spring here there has been a flood of pilgrims and a series of monasteries, fortified and otherwise, to cater to them. The current incarnation has a 15th-century crypt chapel, 19th-century main church filled with icons and wax votive offerings of body parts donated in hopes of miraculous cures. The spring is below the church. The official end of the peninsula is 5km (3 miles) further on at Zafer Burnu. 🕒 45 min. *Far end of the peninsula. No phone. Admission free. Daily 9am–5pm.*

Where to Stay & Dine

TIP

There are few hotels in the Karpaz and most are simple but consider spending at least a night here to experience the peace of this relatively untouched corner of the country.

Alevkayali İSKELE TURKISH/ SEAFOOD Large, friendly waterfront restaurant serving seafood and grills to weekend Greek pilgrims and British coach parties. *Yeni Erenköy, İskele.* ☎ 0533 876 0911. Mains 8€–12€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★ **Burhan's Place** GOLDEN BEACH Wake up to the call of wild donkeys on one of the best beaches in Cyprus. Stay in a tent or basic chalet (no air conditioning) for a beach party atmosphere and spectacular sunsets. Burhan also runs an all-day beach bar and restaurant. *Golden Beach.* ☎ 0533 864 1051. www.burhansgoldenbeach.com. 6 bungalows (25€–60€), tents (13€–60€) w/ breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Delcraft** BÜYÜKKONUK Stay in the superbly restored farmhouse, self-catering or B & B, with a cafe on site (for home-cooked meals, phone in advance if not staying). Runs craft activities, walks and tours.

Büyükkonuk. ☎ 0392 383 2038. www.ecotourismcyprus.com. 4 suites. 20€ per person per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Karpaz Arch Houses** DIPKARPAZ A traditional arch house restored and extended to create light, cosy self-catering units around a flowery courtyard. The Manolyam cafe-restaurant next door offers good traditional meals. *Dipkarpaz.* ☎ 0392 372 2009. www.karpazarchhouses.com. 12 units. 30€–50€ per room per night self-catering. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Kaya Artemis** BAFRA A Vegas-style version of the Parthenon, this vast super-luxury resort, built to service a mega-casino, is out on a limb while the area around it is developed. Meantime, it has all the facilities from sports, watersports to spa, four restaurants and a cinema. *Bafra.* ☎ 0392 630 6000. www.kayaartemis.com. 726 rooms. 150€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ **Oasis at Afilyon** DIPKARPAZ A true haven from the world, this tiny guesthouse has a laidback charm, delicious simple food, a turtle beach, ancient ruins and fabulous views. *Dipkarpaz.* ☎ 0533 840 5082/868 5591. www.oasishotelkarpas.com. 6 rooms. 40€–45€ per room per night w/breakfast. No credit cards.

Locally caught fish.



West of Girne (Kyrenia)

There are two very distinct groups of sights west of **Girne**—the tourist villages with their ribbon of beach resorts just to the west of the city, and at the island's western extremity, a clutch of ancient historic sites. Driving directions are simple: keep following the coast road west, turn off it where signed, then come back to the main road and carry on. **START: Karaoğlanoğlu (5km/3 miles) west of Girne. Trip length: 104km (65 miles).**

1 Karaoğlanoğlu. This village may be extremely touristy now, home to the well-known **Escape Beach Club** (see p 115) but it was here that the Turkish invasion landed in 1974. Two monuments commemorate the day, including the **Peace and Freedom Museum**, with a permanent honour guard and headstones for 70 Turkish soldiers who died in action, along with open-air displays of captured vehicles and armoury. ⌚ 15 min. 5km (3 miles) west of Girne. *Peace and Freedom Museum. On main road. No phone. Admission free. Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm.*

2 Hello Basket & Pottery Shops. On your way to Karaman, stop in Edremit where these two pottery and basket shops offer a rare chance to buy local crafts from bright, swirly patterned baskets to pottery painted with miniatures from the Ottoman court. *Edremit.* ☎ 0392 822 3154. *Daily 8:30am–6/7pm.*

3 ★ Karaman (Karmi). Known as the 'English village', Karaman was abandoned by the Greeks in 1974, and leased to British and German expats who have restored it impeccably, with ebullient gardens, a ferocious local standards committee, and street names such as Geranium Lane. It's a pretty place to walk, with several paths nearby and a small Bronze Age cemetery (19th century B.C.) about 1km (½ mile) below the village. There are also a couple of thirst-quenching cafes/restaurants

and pubs. ⌚ 45 min. *Turn left at Karaoğlanoğlu and drive up through Edremit for 4km (2½ miles).*

4 Alsancak. There's not a lot to see in the rather anonymous modern village, but many tourists end up based here, home to numerous expats, holiday hotels and villas, along with a smattering of beaches, beach clubs and restaurants. Nearby are a ruined Byzantine monastery, cut off within a military base, and the remains of ancient **5 Lambousa**, founded by the Phoenicians in the 8th century B.C., a small section of which, including some fish tanks and cliff tombs, are accessible from a path near the Mare Monte Hotel. The rest is behind the military wire. A Byzantine silver dinner service found

Escape Beach Monument, Karaoğlanoğlu.





Local craft at Hello Basket Shop.

here is now displayed in New York, London and Nicosia. There is a weekly Saturday craft market at the Chateau Lambousa Hotel (see p 130).

🕒 30 min. 8km (5 miles) west of Girne. Open access.

6★★ Green Heights Park. A quick lunch stop or a leafy alternative to a day on the beach. At the centre are a large pool, restaurant, bar and cafe and you can set up with a sun-lounger for the day. *Atatürk Caddesi 107, Yeşilbahçe/Alsancak.* ☎ 0533 862 7656/851 7557. Admission free, pool 20YTL (10YTL if eating). Daily summer 9:30am–11pm, winter 9:30am–8pm. \$\$.

7 Koruçam Burnu. The north-western tip of the island and the closest point to mainland Turkey (about 60km/37 miles), this bleak peninsula is home to the island's small Maronite Christian community. Followers of an ancient Syrian sect, they were archers and guides to the 12th-century Crusaders and have held to a traditional religion, which is somewhere between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, acknowledging the supremacy of the Vatican which supports the community. There is a huge church in the village centre, but the biggest draw is the **Yorgo Kasap** restaurant next door (see p 101). *There are two roads onto the peninsula, the first turning right along the coast past Horseshoe Beach and Kayalar, the second turning off just after Çamlıbel and going through Koruçam village.*

8★★★ Mavi Köşk. Just past Çamlıbel is a turnoff to the Mavi Köşk (p 101, **4**).

9 Pighádes. An early Bronze Age settlement, the highlight here is the stone block altar with its bulls' horns. 🕒 15 min. 250m (820 ft.) off the main road, 2km (1 mile) south of Çamlıbel. No phone. Admission free. Fenced, but usually unlocked.

St Mamas

Twelfth-century hermit, Mamas, was arrested for refusing to pay his taxes. While travelling, he met a lion about to eat a lamb. The fearless hermit saved the lamb, mounted the lion and rode it into town with the lamb in his arms, so impressing the Byzantine authorities that they let him off the taxes. Ever since he has been the immensely popular patron saint of tax avoiders, with 14 churches across the island.

10 Güzelyurt. One of the larger towns in North Cyprus, famous for oranges and the Saturday morning market, a local affair full of cheap clothes, fruit and veg (opposite the museum). Güzelyurt is worth a quick stop to look at the **Church of St Mamas**, which supposedly houses the saint's tomb, hung around with eerie waxwork votive offerings (many of them ears as he is meant to cure earache). It is now an icon museum, part of the **Archaeology and Natural History Museum** (in the former Bishop's Palace) with finds from Vuni and Soli as well as a strange collection of dead animals such as a two-headed, eight-legged lamb. The town also has one of the country's two steam engines, relics of the short-lived railway that once ran to Famagusta. ⌚ 45 min. *Ecevit Caddesi. No phone. Admission 7YTL. Daily summer 9am–6:30pm, winter 9am–4:30pm.*

11 Lefke. This area was dominated by copper mining for several thousand years (p 27) until 1974 when the mines closed, leaving behind the rusting jetties. Now the farming town is home to a European university, and is also famous for the lemons produced here.

12 ★★ Soli. Many people never get further than the Byzantine basilica (4th–6th century A.D.), one of the earliest churches on the island and destroyed during the Arab invasions in the 7th century. Yet the town is much older, founded in the 11th century B.C. as the Assurian colony of Si-il-u, later becoming one of the 10 Greek city-states of Cyprus. Up the hill is the heavily over-restored 2nd to 3rd century A.D. theatre. A temple to Aphrodite and Isis, along with the agora (forum) are fenced off and visible only from a distance. A famous statue of Aphrodite (2nd century B.C.) and the other best finds

are in the Cyprus museum in South Nicosia, other remains are in Güzelyurt. ⌚ 45 min–1 hr. *Turn off the main road at Yedidalga (opposite the iron jetty), Lefke. ☎ 0392 727 8035. Admission 7YTL. Mon–Sat 8am–5pm.*

13 ★★★ Vuni (Vouni). From this green hill, the Persian king could keep an eye on Soli and the busy harbour. The peacefulness of the surroundings today belies the busy 137-room complex of the 5th century B.C., with three terraces cascading down the hillside. The highest held a shrine to Athena and the treasury; the second the palace, baths, storage rooms and a fountain courtyard; in the third, down beside the sea, dwelled the ordinary people in simple stone and mud houses. It was here that a baked clay cup containing the 'Vouni treasure' was found. ⌚ 30–45 min. *Turn off the coast road 2km (1 mile) south of Yedidalga, Lefke. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily 9:30am–4:30pm.*

View across Vuni.



Where to Stay

TIP

Most out-of-town hotels run free shuttle buses into the centre of Girne, while those without beach access run shuttles to the beach and have deals with beach clubs for free access.

★ Almond Village Resort

ALSANCAK A friendly resort with spacious, low-rise villas and bungalows with the option of self-catering. Guests rave about this hotel, even though the beach is a 20-minute walk away. *Alsancak, 8km (5 miles) west of Girne.* ☎ 0392 821 2885. www.almond-holidays.com. 26 villas, 7 rooms. 50€–70€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ Chateau Lambousa

LAPTA A comfortable, crenellated resort hotel, based on Caravanseraï design, with a pool, private beach (shared with its sister property) and views out to the sea or mountains. Crafts market on Saturdays. *Cakmak Caddesi, Lapta.* ☎ 0392 821 8751 3. www.celebrity-hotel.com. 71 rooms. 30€–50€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ The Hideaway Club

EDREMIT In the foothills of the mountains, with stunning views, this is the closest thing North Cyprus has to a boutique accommodation, with a renowned restaurant, roof terrace, pool and cool rooms. *Edremit.* ☎ 0392 822 2620-2. www.hideawayclub.com. 31 rooms. 75€–100€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

Lefke Gardens **LEFKE** This simple hotel on the hill overlooking the bay is one of few places to stay in the far west. Although it is not



Almond Village Resort, Alsancak.

situated on the beach, it does feature a small pool with a bar and restaurant. *Lefke, Güzelyurt.* ☎ 0392 728 8223-28. info@lefkedgardenhotel.com. 21 rooms. 30€–40€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ The Mercure

KARAOĞLAN-OĞLU It may look less than welcoming from a distance but inside is the most glamorous resort on the north coast, with a spa, casino, private beach, four bars and three restaurants, including a steak house and sushi bar. *Kervansaray Mevkii, Karaoğlanoğlu.* ☎ 0392 650 2500. www.mercurecyprus.com. 299 rooms. 130€–200€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ Riverside Holiday Village

ALSANCAK Although it has grown massively, this laidback resort still has real charm, its rooms and villas scattered between citrus groves and family-friendly swimming pools. Not on the beach. *Alsancak, 8km (5 miles) west of Girne.* ☎ 0392 821 8906 07. www.riversideholidayvillage.com. 300 rooms. 50€–80€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

Where to Dine

TIP

The villages west of Girne are crammed with some of North Cyprus's best restaurants. Everyone has their favourites—so ask locals for other suggestions.

★★★ **The Ambiance** KARAOĞLANOĞLU INTERNATIONAL BEACH CLUB/BAR/RESTAURANT Trendy beach club offering cocktails by the pool, ice-creams, sandwiches, salads and a full international menu with a terrace and sea views. *Parasut Sokak 20, Karaoğlanoğlu, west of Girne.* ☎ 0392 822 2849. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **Aphrodite** LAPTA TURKISH/SEAFOOD Small, eccentric beach-front restaurant. Cernal brews his own wines, brings his baby donkey into the restaurant, and provides an unforgettable evening. Advisable to book in advance. *Hacı Kaya Sok, Lapta, signposted from the main road west of Girne.* ☎ 0542 853 8792. Mains 10€–18€ inc. meze. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner.

Aspava YEDIDALGA BEACH BAR/RESTAURANT Fresh seafood, kebabs, pizza and *lahmacun* (dough topped with mince) are on the menu at this huge seafront terrace restaurant in the far west corner of North Cyprus. *Between Soli and Vuni in Yedidalga.* ☎ 0392 727 7621. Mains 8€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily lunch & dinner.

★★ **Cenap** ALSANCAK TRADITIONAL A hugely popular restaurant in the centre of Alsancak with a one-price, all-you-can-eat blow-out selection of some 200 varieties of meze that just keep coming. Regular

live music nights. Advisable to book in advance. *Ankara Caddesi, Alsancak.* ☎ 0392 821 8417/3020. Dinner 25€. No credit cards. Daily dinner only.

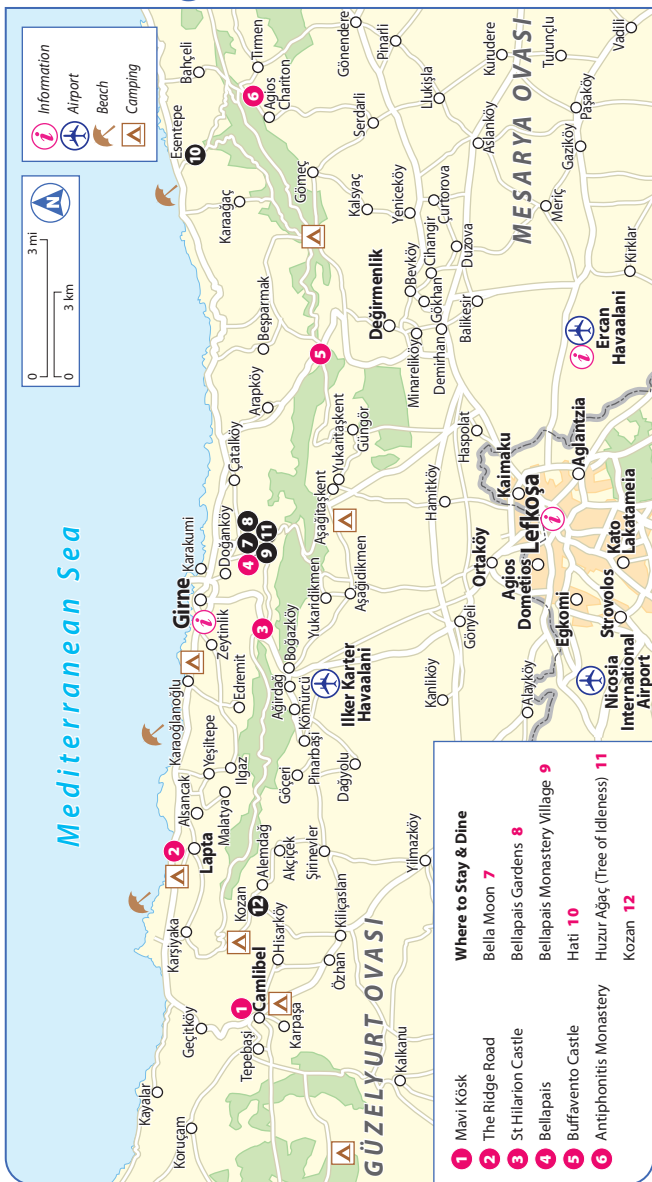
Hoots ALSANCAK BAR/RESTAURANT Beer and darts, cottage pie and *kleftiko* sit happily side by side in this friendly village eatery and bar. There's a happy hour on Friday evenings, garden area in the summer and log fire in winter. *Ilgaz, Alsancak.* ☎ 0392 821 1029. Mains 9€–12€. No credit cards. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner.

★ **Tervetolua** ALSANCAK TRADITIONAL A small hotel with a simple, affordable menu featuring a lavish array of hot and cold meze. A favourite with local expats. *Sehit Türker Caddesi, Alsancak. 8km (5 miles) west of Girne city centre (by the Merit Hotel sign).* ☎ 0392 821 1229. Mains 15€–18€ inc. meze, dessert, coffee and brandy. No credit cards. Daily dinner only.

Aphrodite restaurant.



Mediterranean Sea



Sharply creased mountains trail east to west just inland from the coast, stretching most of the way across North Cyprus. The Beşparmak (Five Finger) Mountains were named after a fist-shaped peak supposedly given its shape when Byzantine hero Dhiyenis Akritas leapt the 60km (37 mile) gap from mainland Turkey, sinking his fingers into the mountain as he landed. Allow 2 days for this tour.

START: Mavi Köşk (25km/15½ miles west of Girne). Trip length: 57km (35 miles).

1 ★★★ Mavi Köşk. Built in 1957, with an escape hatch from the main bedroom and an earthquake-proofed children's guest room, the 'glamorous' Mavi Köşk (Blue House) is a monumental ode to kitsch from the zodiac bar to the iguana-skin drinks cupboard. Even the kitchen tables were matched to the different bedrooms so guests knew where to sit. Nearby is the **Pighádes** sanctuary. ⌚ 1½ hr. *From Çamlıbel take the road to Güzelyurt and turn left at the sign. You will need photo ID as it is on military land. Greek Cypriots are not allowed to visit. ☎ 0392 714 3624. Admission 2YTL. Tues–Sun 9am–6pm. Guided tours only.*

2 ★ The Ridge Road. Basically this does what it says on the tin – this road runs along the ridge of the mountains with some hair-raising hairpin bends in place and death-defying cliffs in others. The drive through the forests is stunning while stopping points offer spectacular panoramic views. The walking



Check out the kitsch décor at Mavi Köşk.

paths through the woods provide a good opportunity for spotting birds and wildflowers. Part way between St Hilarion and Kozan is a Turkish tank which fell off the road in 1974.

3 ★★★ kids St Hilarion Castle. Known to the ancient Greeks as Didymos (Twin Peaks), this was later converted by the Lusignans to Dieu

Mafia Man?

A smoothly good-looking Italian–Greek man, a successful lawyer, car dealer and supposedly an EOKA (Greek for National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) gunrunner with links to the Mafia and Archbishop Makarios, Byron (Paolo) Paolides is the stuff of many legends. He escaped in 1974, probably dying in Italy in 1986, either shot by a Turk or the Mafia.



The main street in Bellapais.

d'Amour (Love of God) although today St Hilarion is named after a 7th-century hermit. The Byzantines fled up here in the wake of the 7th-century Arab invasions, loving its lack of accessibility and great views of any future invaders. Their castle was massively extended by the Lusignan knights but was abandoned by the Venetians in 1489. It last saw action in the 1970s when it was occupied by the Turkish-Cypriot Resistance (TMT) in the months before partition. There are three sections and over 450 very uneven stairs between them. 🕒 **2 hr.** *Just west of the main Girne–Lefkoşa road, about 4km (2½ miles) from Girne. No phone. Admission 7YTL. Daily summer 9am–6:30pm, winter 9am–4:30pm (last admission 1 hr earlier).*

4 ★★★ **Bellapais.** There's a cosily EM Forster, Sunday evening TV feeling to Bellapais, with its charming small hotels, garden restaurants, mountain and sea views, all wrapped around a Gothic Abbey. Although founded by Augustinians, the monks soon adopted the white habit of the Premonstratensian order and eventually moved onto keeping concubines and populating the monastery with their own offspring. Despite their unusual lifestyle, they were popular with the Lusignan monarchy and the abbey was well endowed, leading to the architectural glories best seen in the 14th-century cloister. Concerts are still held regularly in the refectory. 🕒 **45 min.** **Bellapais.** ☎ **0392 815 7540.** *Admission 9YTL. Daily summer*

Lawrence Durrell

British novelist and travel writer Lawrence Durrell moved to Cyprus in 1952, teaching English literature, and writing some of his finest work, including the *Alexandrian Quartet* and *Bitter Lemons*, which describes life in Cyprus. His former home, at Aq Limon Sokağı 15, is marked by a plaque.

Birds

Cyprus is a birdwatcher's paradise with 347 species to be seen, 46 native, seven of them endemic and the rest migrants. However, they survive in the teeth of an annual onslaught from the hunters who trap hundreds of thousands of songbirds each year for the pot. KUŞKOR, the North Cyprus Society for the Protection of Birds (☎ 0392 815 7337) does what it can.

9am–8pm, winter 9am–4:45pm (last admission 30 min earlier).

5 ★ Buffavento Castle. Only the hardy make it as far as Buffavento (the well-named 'Gust of Wind'), perched at a dizzying 940m (3,083 ft.) near Beşparmak Peak. Even the Lusignans used this wild, high fortress as a prison. You don't need a four-wheel-drive, but you need caution and time to negotiate the gravel road and once there, the walk up to the castle is a healthy, vertical 30 minutes. However, the setting is superb and there are also three Byzantine monasteries nearby, **Ayios Chrysostomos**, **Panayia Absinthiotissa** and **Souarp Magar**. ⌚ 3–4 hr. 6km (4 miles) from the Girne–Gazimağusa road, along a narrow gravel path. Get detailed local instructions before setting out. No phone. Admission free. Open access.

6 ★★ Antiphonitis Monastery. Gaining entry can be problematic but the setting of this exquisite Byzantine church alone is worth the visit. It is situated in one of the most serene and beautiful valleys on the island, backed by woods with views to the sea. Once inside, the 12th-century church glories in frescoes, still magnificent although sadly ravaged by time and would-be thieves. ⌚ 30 min. Turn off the coast road to **Esentepe**, head through the village and after about 4km (2½ miles), look for the signs. It is also accessible from the coast road. ☎ 0533 866 5315. Admission 5YTL. Supposedly open daily summer 9am–5pm, winter 9am–12:30pm, 1:30–4:45pm. If it is locked when you get there, phone the caretaker.

Where to Stay & Dine

TIP

Bellapais makes a quieter alternative to the coastal strip, with several charming hotels. Most of the local restaurants will provide a free taxi service from your Girne hotel.

★★ Bella Moon BELLAPAIS TRADITIONAL A leafy garden and roof terrace near the abbey make this an ideal spot for a romantic evening. Order your main course and meze arrive automatically. **Bellapais**. ☎ 0392 815 4311. Mains 15€–22€ inc. meze. AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner.



Take a break under Durrell's Tree of Idleness.

★★ Bellapais Gardens BELLAPAIS

A bougainvillea-draped boutique hotel with panoramic views over Girne. The chalets and pool are tucked in just below the abbey walls. Add fine food, friendly staff, cookery and painting courses. *Beylerbeyi, Bellapais.* ☎ 0392 815 6066/7668. www.bellapaisgardens.com. 18 chalets. 90€–130€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★ Bellapais Monastery

Village BELLAPAIS Built into the hillside just below the village, this resort has monastic colonnades, indoor and outdoor pools, a couple of bars, restaurant, great views and a

mix of coolly comfortable hotel rooms and mini-villas. *Bellapais Caddesi, Bellapais.* ☎ 0392 815 9171. www.bellapaismonasteryvillage.com. 63 rooms. 80€ per room per night w/ breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

Hati ESENTEPE CAFE/BAR/RESTAURANT

A simple local cafe that is open all hours for anything from coffee and toast to wraps, burgers, kebabs or freshly caught fish. *Kayseri Sok 53, Esentepe.* ☎ 0533 863 3862. Mains 8€–12€. AE, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

Huzur Ağaç (Tree of Idleness)

BELLAPAIS TURKISH A little over-touristy but well positioned opposite the Abbey, with a rousing Cypriot night every Saturday. The tree on the terrace is top contender (of three) for the one under which Lawrence Durrell wrote *Bitter Lemons*. *Bellapais.* ☎ 0392 815 3380. Mains 7€–12€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★ **Kozan NR LAPTA GRILL** Miles from anywhere, surrounded by wild mountains and pine forests, you can bring a picnic, have a barbecue or enjoy the restaurant's traditional meze and grills. There are horses, walks and views that stretch to heaven. *Ridge Road, above Lapta.* ☎ 0533 845 7070. Mains 8€–12€. No credit cards. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner. ●

Revenger's Tragedy

Life at the Lusignan court was bloody murder. Eleanor of Aragon blamed her brother-in-law, John of Antioch, for the death of her husband, Peter I. She persuaded John, now regent to the young Peter II, that his Bulgarian bodyguards were plotting against him and he supposedly threw them all from the roof of Prince John's Tower. Once he was defenceless, she invited him to dinner, served her husband's bloodstained clothes to him on a plate and ordered her own manservant to murder John in revenge.

10

The Best Cities & Towns in North Cyprus



Girne (Kyrenia)



- 1** Harbour
- 2** Girne Castle
- 3** Folk Arts Museum
- 4** Agha Cafer Paşa Mosque
- 5** Archangelos Mikhaelos Church & Icon Museum
- 6** Round Tower Gallery
- 7** Weekly Market
- 8** Bandabuliyā
- Where to Stay**
- The British Hotel **9**
- The Colony **10**
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- Onar Village Resort **12**
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- The Old Grapevine **20**

Previous page: The restored former hotel Büyük Han in Gazimağusa.

Girne (Kyrenia), a small harbour city on the north coast is a tourism centre, with the vast majority of visitors to North Cyprus choosing to stay here or along the coast to either side of the town. This is the most attractive town in the north encompassing an atmospheric walled harbour district, plenty of restaurants and a fabulous castle. **START: Girne harbour.**

1 ★★★ Harbour. A horseshoe-shaped harbour, lined by carob warehouses and Ottoman mansions, protected by a vast castle and a breakwater, this has to be one of the loveliest waterfronts on the Mediterranean. The area is particularly alluring at night when the restaurant tables are packed, the gulets play at anchor and the flood-lights dance on the water. The tower was used to anchor a heavy medieval chain fence that locked in the boats after dark. Pulley systems rigged through stones were used to haul boats onto the shore and to pull carob sacks up into the warehouses (look at the warehouse balconies). A faint outline remains of a Gothic arch which once led through to the castle moat.

Tourist Office

Kordonboyu (at the end of the harbour opposite the White Pearl Hotel). ☎ 815 6079/2145. Daily 9am–8pm.

The chain tower and traditional gulets in Girne harbour.



Displays at the Shipwreck Museum, Girne Castle.

2 ★★★ kids Girne Castle.

Based on a Greco-Roman fort, little more than a chapel exists of the Byzantine castle built to protect the port from Arab invaders. After the arrival of the Normans in 1191, the castle grew rapidly, changing again under the Venetians, who added the distinctive round towers and gun ports. The Ottomans added to it again, while the British used it as a prison. The castle leaflet has an excellent map which highlights the different periods. Don't miss the two small museums of prehistory and the ancient shipwreck (p 110).

🕒 1½ hr. **Harbour. No phone.**

Admission 10YTL. Supposedly daily summer 9am–8pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm.

3 Folk Arts Museum. Get a sense of island life in this traditional harbour-front house from the olive press on the ground floor, the wedding dress on the first and the bedroom at the top (plus other displays). Virtually next door is the town's oldest church, the 14th-century **Church of Khryssopolitissa** (closed to the public). ⌚ 45 min.

Harbour. No phone. Admission 3YTL or free with a castle entry ticket.

Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–4:45pm.

4 Agha Cafer Paşa Mosque.

Built in the 1580s and named after its benefactor, some say this back-street Ottoman mosque with a green screen, three rooms and a single minaret is actually a converted Lusignan warehouse. Next to it, the three-arched **Hasan**

Kavizade Huseyn Efendi Fountain was built in 1841. ⌚ 30 min.

Agha Cafer Paşa Caddesi. No phone. Admission free. Daily summer 9am–midday, winter 9am–4:45pm.

5 ★ Archangelos Mikhaelos Church & Icon Museum. Built in 1860, this gleaming white church is now an icon museum. Most of the icons are 19th century; the oldest dates back to 1714 with common themes including George and the Dragon, John the Baptist (Joachim) and St Mamas, popular local patron saint of tax avoiders (p 128). On the



Icon of St George and the Dragon at the Icon Museum in Archangelos Mikhaelos Church.

street opposite are a few of the 70 4th-century A.D. cave tombs, cut into rock at various points around the town. ⌚ 30 min. Off Tayfalar Sokak, behind the British Hotel near the Harbour. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–4:45pm (last admission 30 min earlier).

6 Round Tower Gallery. A Lusignan tower, built in 1300, has

Boat Tours

From Girne harbour, a fleet of boats fan out along the coast on lazy day-long tours. Nothing much happens—the elegant wooden Turkish coastal vessels (gulets) meander up the coast while you enjoy the view of the mountains, find a nice beach for a swim and some sunbathing, everyone has lunch and comes home. Some ‘party boats’ offer music. To book, wander down the line of boats and compare prices.

Love Goddess & the Lionheart

There has been a settlement here since the Neolithic period.

During the Bronze Age it was an independent city state known as Girne. In 312 b.c., it was conquered by Salamis who renamed it Keravnia (meaning Aphrodite with the Thunderbolt). The Arabs attacked in the 7th century, prompting the Byzantines to build the formidable castle. It wasn't impregnable, however, and in 1192, it was conquered by Richard the Lionheart. He sold it first to the Knights Templar then to the Lusignans who rebuilt the castle and shifted the harbour to its current position. It was sufficiently strong to survive a siege by the Genoese in 1373/4, but although the Venetians built newer, tougher town walls when they took over in 1535, they were still not powerful enough to withstand the Ottoman armies and in 1571, the town fell to the Turks. It really began to grow during the British period when it was the favourite spot of the colonial administration—a British love affair that continues to this day.

been restored as an excellent arts and crafts shop which also has photo and art exhibitions. 🕒 15 min. *Opposite Bandabuliya, off Rizki Caddesi.* ☎ 0392 815 6377. AE, DC, MC, V.

7 Weekly Market. Girne's weekly outdoor market is held on Wednesdays near the bus station. It is a very local affair—fruit and vegetables, cheap clothes and toys, but very few souvenirs. 🕒 15 min. *Dr Halim Hocaoglu Caddesi.*

8 Bandabuliya. The covered market, built in 1878 during British rule, has been restored and now houses a couple of restaurants, a juice bar (live music at weekends) and some craft stalls. Drop by for a look at the building at least and the quirky shipwreck themed ice-cream parlour in the centre. 🕒 10 min. *Off Rizki Caddesi. Mon–Sat 9am–late.*



Fresh produce at Girne's weekly market.

Where to Stay

TIP

Many people also choose to stay in Bellapais (p 134) or the villages just to the west of Girne (p 126) which are within easy reach of the town.

★ The British Hotel HARBOUR

Furnishings are smarter than average in this popular family-run backstreet hotel. Harbour views from the top floors only. Bar and roof terrace, but no restaurant. *Yacht Harbour.*

☎ 0392 815 2240/5731. www.britishhotelcyprus.com. 18 rooms. 60€–70€ per double room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ The Colony CENTRAL GIRNE

It may look old colonial but this central oasis of luxury is under 10 years old, offering an all-singing five-star experience, with a rooftop terrace bar and pool, choice of restaurants, spa and casino. *Ecevit Caddesi, Belediye Meydanı.* ☎ 0392 815 1518. www.thecolonycyprus.com. 94 rooms. 240€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

The family-run Onar Village Resort offers panoramic views.



★★ **Hotel Pia Bella** GIRNE This cavernous yet strangely cosy and welcoming four-star hotel close to the town centre is popular with an older generation of British tourists. It has two pools, gardens, massage facilities and a private football pitch. *Iskendurun Caddesi 14.* ☎ 0392 650 5000. www.piabella.com. 100 rooms. 70€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ Onar Village Resort NEAR

GIRNE A friendly family-run hotel perched halfway up the mountain with panoramic views, the Onar has slightly old-fashioned but comfortable rooms, attracting many loyal repeat visitors. Indoor and outdoor pools, Turkish bath, massage facilities and a private museum. *Off Ecevit Caddesi, 5km (3 miles) from the town centre.* 44 rooms, 18 villas. 60€–80€ per double room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★★★ The Savoy Ottoman Palace CENTRAL GIRNE

All chandeliers, gilt, crimson and gleaming marble, the sumptuous town centre Savoy has a pool, choice of restaurants, spa and casino, and deal with Escape Beach Club. *Sehit Fehmi Ercan Sokak 5.* ☎ 0392 444 3000. www.savoyhotel.com.tr. 142 rooms. 200€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ The White Pearl HARBOUR

A tiny harbour-front hotel with picture-perfect castle views from all its simply but well-furnished rooms, with a roof terrace and bar. Meals by arrangement only. *Old Harbour.* ☎ 0392 815 0429/30. www.whitepearlhotel.com. 10 rooms. 68€ per double room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

Where to Dine

TIP

Girne's old harbour is ringed by restaurants and cafes but there are some excellent alternatives tucked into the backstreets and areas such as Bellapais in the mountains (p 134) or the villages just to the west (p 126) are within easy reach for dinner.

Café Harbour/Pizza Harbour

HARBOUR PIZZAS & BURGERS

Popular side by side old harbour hangout with the best setting in town and a huge waterside terrace where you can wile away hours with a beer, a burger and the boats. *Old Harbour, next to White Pearl Hotel.*

☎ 0392 853 3333. Mains 9€–12€. AE, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

Carob HARBOUR TURKISH/ INTERNATIONAL

A restored stone-built carob warehouse with three floors, you can watch the sunset over the harbour from the roof terrace over a plate of hummus and halloumi. Houses a cafe bar and main restaurant. *Old Harbour.* ☎ 0392 815 6277. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **Efendi** CENTRAL GIRNE MODERN/ INTERNATIONAL Run by an English couple, this restored backstreet Ottoman mansion has a courtyard garden, giant apricot tree and sinfully delicious modern British/international food (Thai curry followed by sticky toffee pudding). It is advisable to book ahead. *6 Kamil Paşa Caddesi.* ☎ 0392 884 7417/ 1149. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★ **Morelli's** CENTRAL GIRNE EUROPEAN Expect a friendly neighbourhood atmosphere at this relatively

unknown restaurant just off the main square. Food is good quality, mainly European fare. *13 Efele Sokak, off Municipality Square near the Colony Hotel.* ☎ 0392 815 4753. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner.

★★ **Niazi's** CENTRAL GIRNE TURKISH Probably the town's most famous restaurant, a temple to meat centred on the 'full kebab' grilled in the open. The good food and smart surroundings attract local yummy mummies and tourists alike, so it's advisable to book ahead. *Kordonboyu, opposite the Dome Hotel.* ☎ 0392 815 2160. Mains 10€–18€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★ **The Old Grapevine** GIRNE TURKISH/ INTERNATIONAL The location next to a petrol station at the back of the town may not be salubrious but the food here has a devoted following, with impressive steak. *Off Ecevit Caddesi, near the Shell Garage.* ☎ 0392 815 2496. Mains 10€–15€. AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun lunch & dinner. Map p 138.

Chef cooking kebabs at Niazi's.

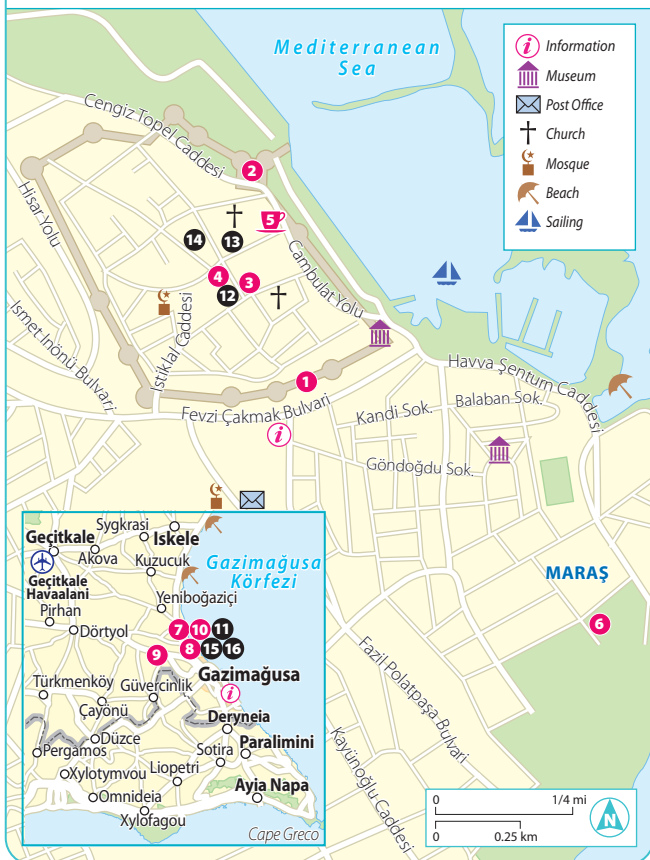


Gazimağusa (Famagusta)

- 1 City Walls
- 2 Othello's Tower
- 3 Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque
- 4 Namik Kemal Meydanı
- 5 Petek Pastanesi
- 6 Varósha
- 7 Salamis
- 8 St Barnabas Monastery
- 9 Enkomi
- 10 Royal Tombs, Salamis

Where to Stay & Dine

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- Ginkgo's **13**
- Historia **14**
- Koca Reis Resort **15**
- Salamis Bay Hotel **16**



After the fall of Acre in 1271, Famagusta became a crusading capital and by the 14th century was one of the richest cities in the Mediterranean. In 1571, this golden age was ended abruptly by the Ottomans after a 10-month siege. Now a quiet backwater with superb beaches, it has a compelling historic centre, still encased in formidable Venetian walls. **START: Land Gate.**

1 ★★★ City Walls. Although Famagusta had been fortified by the Byzantine and Lusignan rulers, the massive, roughly rectangular walls that now enclose the city are said to have been the brainchild of Leonardo da Vinci. At 15m (50 ft.) high and 8m (26 ft.) wide, they stretch for 3km (2 miles), punctuated by 15 bastions and five gates. It is possible to walk parts of them—the best stretch is from the Land Gate where you can explore the rooms and dungeons of the **Akkule Masjid** round to the **Canbulat Tower**, named after a Turkish hero who sacrificed himself on a giant Venetian wheel of knives in order to put it out of action. His tomb is here along with some guns, Turkish tiles and Venetian plates. 🕒 **1 hr. No phone. Walls, admission free, open access. Akkule Masjid, admission 3YTL.**

Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm. Canbulat Tower, admission 3YTL. Daily summer 9am–6pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm.

Tourist Office

Tucked into the gatehouse of the city walls. **Land Gate.** ☎ **0392 366 2865.** *Daily summer 7:30am–2pm, winter 8am–5pm.*

2 ★ Othello's Tower. Although Shakespeare made Othello a Moor, he placed him in Cyprus which was under Muslim rule in 1604. It is debated that he was possibly inspired by either Sir Christoforo Moro, the Venetian governor in 1506, whose wife died at sea, or possibly Francesco de Sessa, a

Gateway of the 12th-century Othello's Tower.





Main square and Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque.

servant exiled in 1544 for unknown crimes, nicknamed 'Il Moro' for his dark skin. In reality, Othello's Castle is just an interesting 12th-century tower, in the sea wall, transformed by the Venetians into a mini-castle, its gateway protected by Venetian lions. ⌚ 30 min. *Canbulat Yolu*. No phone. Admission 7YTL. Daily 10am–5pm.

3 ★★★ Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque. Built as the Cathedral of St Nicholas (1298–1326), and modelled on Reims Cathedral, it was said that the senior architect was so jealous of his young apprentice's work that he pushed him from one of the towers. Suffering from earthquake

damage, one tower now sports a minaret, the first inkling of the fact that the exquisite Gothic façade has, since the 1570s, sheltered a mosque. Inside, the soaring vaults are whitewashed, the Crusader tombs are carpeted over and a *mihrab* (a niche in the south wall), pointing towards Mecca. It is all a far cry from the time of the Lusignan knights when the kings of Jerusalem were crowned here. Just outside are a Venetian loggia, an Ottoman fountain and a tropical fig tree said to have been planted in 1250. ⌚ 20 min. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–7pm, winter 9am–5pm.

St Barnabas

Although not an Apostle, Barnabas was one of the most influential leaders of the Christian church. Born Joseph, a Jew from Cyprus, he was an early convert, present with Peter and Paul at the Antioch meeting which gave the church its name. He introduced Christianity to Cyprus, where he is thought to have been martyred by being stoned to death at Salamis, probably in about A.D. 61. He remains the patron saint of the island, his feast day celebrated on 11 June.

4 ★★ Namik Kemal Meydanı.

The town's main square is a spectacular open space with the mosque/cathedral at one end. Just to the north of this is a former **medrese** (religious school), now a restaurant with a statue of the dissident Ottoman poet and playwright after whom the square is named. Beyond that is the **Bandabulya** or covered market. In the northeast corner of the square behind the piles of cannon balls left over from the Ottoman siege lie the ruins of the **Venetian palace** and the **prison** in which Kemal was imprisoned in the 1870s. The **Turkish baths** are now a cafe and at the far end of the square, the 14th-century **Church of St Peter and St Paul** has been a gallery and theatre but is currently locked up. It is one of an estimated 365 churches in the town, most in ruins. **Kemal's Prison. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–1pm, 2–4:45pm.**

5 **Petek Pastanesi.** The main reasons to come here are for the calorie-laden patisserie and the best ice-creams in town. Also serves salads and snacks. **Yeşil Deniz Sok., opposite the Sea Gate tower on the city walls. ☎ 0392 366 7104. AE, DC, MC, V. \$.**

6 **Varósha.** South of the city centre is a 6km (4 miles) crescent of startlingly white sand, Glossa Beach, behind which stands the Varósha, once an international resort to rival the Riviera. Since 1974, it has been forbidden territory, a ghost city blocked off to all but the Turkish army and packs of feral dogs that roam the streets between the now crumbling apartment blocks and hotels. It is an eerie sight. The only place to see it is from the beach

beside the Palm Beach Hotel. **On the southern edge of town by the Palm Beach Hotel. No access. No photography.**

7 ★★★ **Salamis.** Founded according to legend by a hero of Troy, it is more likely that the town was built by survivors of an earthquake at nearby Enkomi in 1075 B.C. By the 8th century B.C., this was an important trading centre that became a rival to Alexandria, Athens and Ephesus. Plagued by earthquakes, it was finally killed off by the Arab invasions of A.D. 648. Relatively little of the vast site has been fully excavated, but there is still enough to require good shoes, a hat and water bottle. Start at the vast 1st-century gymnasium and baths complex, with its mosaics and sociable line of communal latrines for 44 people. The restored theatre here is used for the summer festival. There is also a largely unrestored amphitheatre, the agora/forum and a temple to Zeus. The 4th-century **Ayios Epiphanius Basilica** is the largest on the island. Nearby, there's a splendid beach by the ancient harbour. ⌚ 1 hr. 7km (4½ miles) north of Gazimağusa. ☎ 0392 366 5582. **Admission 9YTL. Daily summer 9am–7pm, winter 9am–5pm.**

Fresco found in ancient baths at Salamis.



A Donum of Your Own?

Being tempted by the cheap property prices in North Cyprus is potentially filled with legal pitfalls due to disputed land claims by the Greeks. Property comes in two forms: Turkish title—clearly owned by Turks before independence; or ‘exchange’ land, property formerly owned by the Greeks which is in line for compensation payment. Sorting the legalities can take years and you may still not be entirely safe. Turkish title land will cost buyers a lot more. Land in North Cyprus is measured in donums. 1 donum = 1,388 sq m (a third of an acre or 14,400 sq ft.). This is divided into 4 evleks, of which 1 evlek = 334 sq m (0.1 acre or 3,600 sq ft. or ayaks). A foreigner is not allowed to own more than one donum.

8 ★★ St Barnabas Monastery. As patron saint of the island, the grave of St Barnabas is a major pilgrimage site for the Cypriot faithful. The monastery has been here since A.D. 477, but the current building dates to 1756. The last monks moved out in 1976 since when the church has become an icon museum while the monastic buildings house an Archaeological Museum, with

Religious icon on display at St Barnabas Monastery.



some magnificent Bronze Age urns and whacky ceramic figurines of charioteers. ⌚ 45 min. **Salamis Bay, 7km (4½ miles) north of Gazimağusa.** ☎ 0392 366 5582. Admission 7YTL. *Daily summer 9am–7pm, winter 9am–5pm.*

9 Enkomi. See p 120, 6.

10 ★ Royal Tombs, Salamis. Rich 8th–6th century B.C. cave tombs can be found spread over a wide area of Salamis Bay. The cremated ‘kings’ were buried with their servants, chariot and horses, sacrificed still in harness (tombs 47 and 79 are the best). St Catherine’s Prison (tomb 50) is named after an Alexandrian saint who was supposedly imprisoned here by her father for refusing an arranged marriage; she was later martyred on a spiked wheel. A site museum and a collection of around 50 interlinked underground tombs are situated about 300m (984 ft.) away. See p 120. ⌚ 1 hr. *Look out for the sign about 1km (½ mile) south of St Barnabas Monastery on the main road, Salamis Bay. No phone. Admission 7YTL. Daily 8am–6pm (may close at weekends in spite of official opening hours).*

Where to Stay & Dine

TIP

There are slim pickings accommodation wise in this area and virtually nothing in town. Most tourists stay in the Salamis Bay area or visit for the day. There are a few restaurants in Salamis Bay while those in the old town are mainly clustered round the main square.

Crystal Rocks Holiday Resort

SALAMIS BAY Low-key, low-rise beachfront resort, with a pool, beach and restaurant. *Salamis Bay*. ☎ 0392 378 9800. www.yeldenercrystalrocks.com. 62 bungalows. 35€–50€ per double room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ **D&B Café** **OLD TOWN INTERNATIONAL** Buzzing old town cafe/restaurant with a shady view over the Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque. Offers everything from a quick coffee to burgers, kebabs or a full-scale feast. *Namık Kemal Meydanı*. ☎ 0392 366 6610. Mains 8€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★ **Gingko's** **OLD TOWN INTERNATIONAL** A converted *medrese* (religious school) next to the cathedral/mosque in the old town, with pavement tables and a deliciously sophisticated menu that crosses from cafe to restaurant as the day wears on. 1 *Liman Yolu*, next to *Lala Paşa Mosque*. ☎ 0392 366 6660. Mains 10€–20€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

Historia **OLD TOWN INTERNATIONAL** The third of the cafe/restaurants on the main square next to the cathedral/mosque in the old town, with pavement tables, *Historia* offers anything from coffee to salads and kebabs. *Namık Kemal*

Meydanı. ☎ 0392 367 0153. Mains 7€–14€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

Koca Reis Resort **SALAMIS BAY** Positioned on a broad sweep of white sand beach, these comfortable, relatively basic bungalows are part of one of the best restaurants/beach clubs in Salamis Bay. *Kocareis Plajı, Yeniboğazici*. ☎ 0392 378 8229. www.kocareisresort.com. 30 bungalows. 50€–60€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

★ **Salamis Bay Hotel** **SALAMIS BAY** Currently the best on offer in the area though not reaching its claimed five stars. Comfortable, friendly, efficient, with a good pool and beach and OK food if you don't have overambitious expectations. Encompasses several restaurants, a casino, sports, watersports and spa facilities. *Salamis Bay*. ☎ 0392 378 8201 08. www.salamisbayconti.com. 400 rooms. 104€–145€ per person per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

D&B Café in the old town.

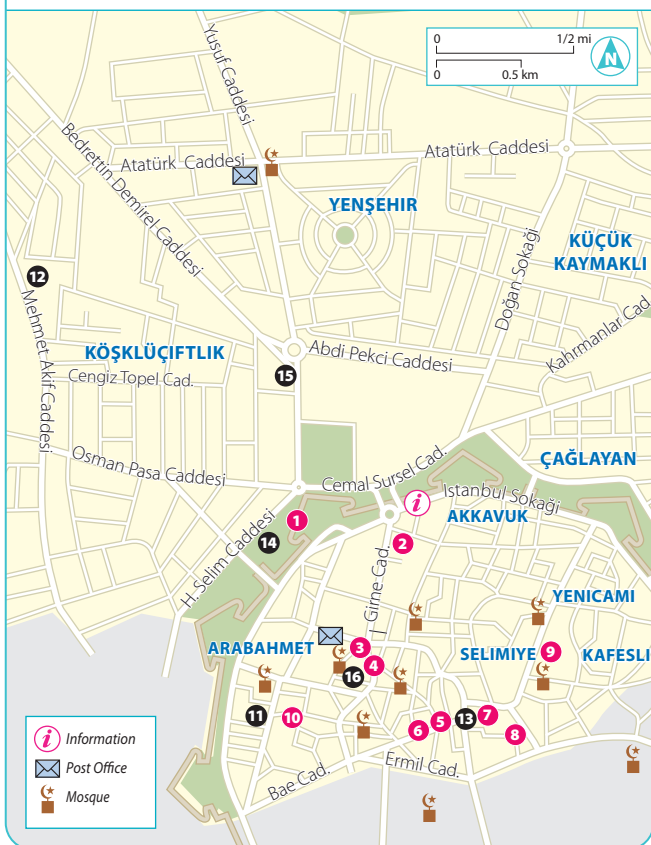


Lefkoşa (North Nicosia)

- 1 City Walls
- 2 Mevlevî Dervish Tekke
- 3 Atatürk Meydanı
- 4 Rustem Bookshop
- 5 Büyük Hammam
- 6 Büyük Han
- 7 Selimiye Mosque
- 8 Sacaklı Ev (Eaved House)
- 9 Lusignan House
- 10 Dervish Paşa House

Where to Stay & Dine

- Boghialian Konak **11**
- Califorian **12**
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- Merit Hotel Lefkoşa **15**
- Saray **16**



The capital of Cyprus, **Nicosia** is a city divided by the barbed wire of the UN Green Line. Set inland on the broad Mesaoria Plain, it is a busy working city, but within the historic core of North Nicosia, now known again by its 12th-century Templar name, Lefkoşa, is a wealth of badly neglected historic treasures worthy of UNESCO World Heritage status. **START: City Walls.**

1 ★ City Walls. In 1567, Venetian military engineer, Julius Savorgnano demolished the city's Lusignan walls and shrunk the perimeter of the city from 5km (3 miles) to 3km (2 miles). In doing so, he destroyed much of the medieval city, including the royal castle, several palaces and around 80 churches. His new walls were designed to withstand cannon rather than arrows, short and stubby, with sloped walls for rolling up the guns and massively wide dry moats in which to trap approaching enemies (now popular for football). Unfortunately, he hadn't finished by the time the Ottomans arrived, so the city fell easily after a siege of 48 days with thousands dead and hundreds taken as slaves. There are 11 bastions, six in the Turkish sector. The way through the walls is at the Girne Gate, marked by a statue of Atatürk and two cannons.

2 ★ Mevlevî Dervish Tekke. In 1231, an Islamic mystic poet, Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi founded a sect based on worshipping in a state of trance induced by whirling



The city walls of Lefkoşa.

dance and chant. The Dervish monastery in Lefkoşa closed in 1923 when Atatürk banned the order in Turkey, and is now open as a museum of Turkish Arts and Industry, with weapons, furniture, musical instruments and manuscripts of the Koran as well as displays about

The Blue Line

In a city famous for its Green Line (p 160), the Tourist Office has created the Blue Line, a 4½km (2.8 miles) heritage walking trail that takes you past all the major sights starting and ending at the Girne Gate, home to the Tourist Office, where you can pick up a leaflet that also details the city's minor sights and museums. ☎ 0392 228 9629. Supposedly (but not always) open Mon–Fri 8:30am–6:30pm, Sat–Sun 9am–1pm.

the Dervish order. ⌚ 45 min. *Girne Caddesi. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–2pm (and Mon 3:30–5:45pm), winter 9am–12:30pm, 1:30–4:45pm.*

Bird's Eye View

The best view of the city is from the rooftop of the Saray Hotel (p 154). There is a small charge unless you have a drink in the rooftop bar.

3 ★ Atatürk Meydanı. From the Girne Gate, Girne Caddesi, the main street, leads down to the central square. Although officially named after Atatürk, everyone just simply talks of the local landmarks, the **Saray Hotel** or the **Venetian Column**. The latter was 'borrowed' from Salamis in 1489 as a base for a Venetian lion which was destroyed by the Ottomans. The British replaced the column, topping it with a copper globe. Also on the square is the **Sarayönü Mosque**, a converted Byzantine church heavily altered in the 1900s.

4 Rustem Bookshop. The only good bookshop in the country, open since 1937, opposite the Saray Hotel, with a reasonable collection of English language books. **22 Kyrenia Caddesi.** ☎ 0392 228 3506. *Mon–Sat 7am–6pm.*

5 ★ Büyük Hammam. A full multi-cultural experience, the Byzantine Church of St George of the Latins transformed by the Ottomans into a hammam (Turkish bath, the direct descendant of the Roman bath), now operating again, offering traditional scrubs and massages. The doorway is at the 14th-century level, way below the modern street. ⌚ 1½ hr. *Off Asmaaltı Sok. No phone. Admission varies according to treatment (up to around 50YTL). Daily 7am–10:30pm.*

6 ★★ Büyük Han. One of the first things the new governor of Cyprus did in 1572 was build this state-of-the-art hotel, with stables for horses and pack animals, lock-ups for the traders' goods, rooms for masters (with fireplaces for winter) and servants and a small mosque. It has now been restored as a shopping centre with craft shops and workshops, cafes, restaurants and even a small theatre offering shadow puppetry. ⌚ 30 min. *Asmaaltı Sok. No phone. Admission free. Mon 8am–9pm, Tues–Sat 8–midnight.*

7 ★★★ Selimiye Mosque. Built over a smaller Byzantine church, the Crusaders began work on this soaring creation in 1209, finally consecrating their masterwork in 1326. The twin towers on the

Clothes shop in the former hotel Büyük Han.



Nightlife

North Cyprus is not the place to come for vibrant nightlife.

There are a couple of discos in the Girne area but most of the so-called nightclubs are exceedingly sleazy professional pick-up joints. Many of the larger hotels have casinos which cater strictly for foreigners (locals, including expat residents, are barred). If you wish to play, take a passport. Other than that, there are a couple of cinemas, and occasional concerts, but most people simply go out to dinner. If they want a good night's clubbing, they head across the border to the south (p 160).

elaborate Gothic façade now sport minarets instead of spires while all Christian symbolism was stripped from the interior which has been whitewashed and carpeted, covering the Templar tombs, which were emptied of their inhabitants. Beside the **Bedesten**, the Ottoman covered market, is currently undergoing restoration. ⌚ 30 min. *Selimiye Sok. No phone. Admission free. Daily summer 9am–7pm, winter 9am–5pm, except during prayers.*

8 ★★ Sacakli Ev (Eaved House). A typical Ottoman mansion, built over the core of an earlier medieval house, this is now an arts centre and gallery. ⌚ 30 min. *Kutuphane Caddesi. ☎ 0392 227 7547. Admission free. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, extended hours during exhibitions.*

9 ★ Lusignan House. One of very few Lusignan houses to have been fully restored, this elegant house with a Gothic arch and inner galleried courtyard, has been simply furnished to give a slight idea of how it would have looked in the 15th century with Ottoman additions. ⌚ 30 min. *Kirlizade Sok. No phone. Admission 5YTL. Daily summer 9am–2pm, winter 9am–12:30pm, 1:30–4:45pm.*

10 ★ Dervish Paşa House. Built in 1807, this was the home of Dervish Paşa, editor of the island's first Turkish language newspaper, *Zaman*, opened in 1891. The museum is perfectly presented as an opulent middle-class dwelling of the period, complete with costumes, furniture, ceramics and glassware. ⌚ 45 min. *Arabahmet. ☎ 0392 227 2916. Admission 5YTL, joint ticket with Lusignan House. Mon–Fri 9am–1pm, 2:30–5pm, Sat 9am–1pm.*

Interior of Selimiye Mosque, once St Sofia Cathedral.



Where to Stay & Dine

TIP

There are few hotels in Lefkoşa. Most people stay in Girne (20 minutes' drive) or across the border. However, the combination of business and politics always attracts good food and Lefkoşa has some of the trendiest restaurants in North Cyprus.

★★★ Boghialian Konak ARABAHMET TRADITIONAL

Located in a carefully restored old town mansion with a shady courtyard close to the Green Line—find some of the city's best Turkish cuisine and ambience. It is advisable to book ahead. *Şehit Salahi Şevket Sokak, Arabahmet.* ☎ 0392 228 0700. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **Californian** KÖŞKLÜÇİFTLİK BAR/DINER Huge, trendy American-style diner serving everything from burgers and pizzas to the inevitable kebabs, Chinese and Italian.

The trendy American-style diner Californian.



Popular with the local gilded youth, business people and tourists.

Mehmet Akif Caddesi. ☎ 0392 227 0700. Mains 10€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **El Sabor** SELIMIYE INTERNATIONAL A haven of trendy leather sofas, with an eclectic menu of excellently cooked oriental noodles, tapas and Italian, this sleek eatery is perfectly located next to the Selimiye Mosque. Live jazz on some evenings. *Selimiye Meydanı.* ☎ 0392 228 8322. Mains 10€–18€. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch & dinner daily.

★ **Hamur** KÖŞKLÜÇİFTLİK TURKISH A quiet converted residence near the Ledra Palace crossing specialising in *mantı* (Turkish ravioli) and *börek* (pastries), with a shady veranda and garden. *2 Selim Caddesi, 46, Köşklüçiftlik.* ☎ 0392 228 0052. Mains 8€–15€. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily.

★★ **Merit Hotel Lefkoşa** KÖŞKLÜÇİFTLİK Newly built in 2008, very close to the city centre, and one of the few genuine five-star properties in North Cyprus, this is a markedly upmarket chain hotel with a casino and spa. *Bedrettin Demirel Caddesi.* ☎ 0392 228 5571. www.merithotels.com. 125 rooms. 200€–300€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V.

Saray ARABAHMET Right in the heart of the old city, this uninviting, but functional 1960s' hotel owned by the Vakıf religious order, does at least offer superb views from its roof terrace, along with a disco and casino. *Atatürk Meydanı.* ☎ 0392 228 3115. saray.hotel@superonline.com. 72 rooms. 65€–90€ per room per night w/breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. ●

The Savvy Traveller



Before You Go

Government Representative Offices

In the UK South Cyprus:

17 Hanover Street, London W1S 1YP
(☎ 020 7569 8800).

North Cyprus: 29 Bedford Square,
London SW18 1DD (☎ 020 7631
1930, www.northcyprus.cc).

In the USA South Cyprus:

13 East, 40th Street, New York, NY
10016 (☎ 212 683 5280, www.cyprustourism.org).

North Cyprus: 1667 K Street, Suite
690, Washington DC, 20006 (☎ 202
887 6189).

Visa Information

To enter South Cyprus, holders of passports from EU countries, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA (among many others) do not require a visa if they are bona fide tourists and stay for fewer than 90 days. Passports issued by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), an entity not recognised by the Republic of Cyprus or the United Nations, are not considered valid. If you have a TRNC stamp in your passport, the immigration authorities will cancel it but should let you in. The reality is that when you cross into the North, a stamp is given on a separate piece of paper to avoid this hassle.

The legal points of entry are: Paphos and Larnaca airports; and Limassol, Larnaca, Latchi and Paphos ports. The North is not considered a legal point of entry.

To visit North Cyprus from another country, entry visas can be obtained on arrival by all foreign nationals (other than Nigerians and Armenians). You will need a full valid passport and a return ticket. For more information, check www.e-kktc.com.

The Best Time to Go

Cyprus is a year-round destination. November, December, January and February are cooler, with some rain and in January and February, snow in the Troodos Mountains. March, April, May and late September/early October are warm enough to swim in the sea but still cool enough to follow more active pursuits. June, July, August and early September can be stiflingly hot with temperatures routinely over 104°F (40°C) by day.

Unlike the South, the North never gets hugely overcrowded. Most historic sites stay open all year (although opening times can be erratic).

Public Holidays

South Cyprus has 15 public holidays. Certain dates, like Orthodox Easter, vary every year. North Cyprus has eight public holidays. In addition, there are two major moveable Islamic religious festivals, 'Şeker Bayram' which celebrates the end of the month-long Ramadan fast, and 'Kurban Bayram'. There are also celebrations for major Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter (both western and Greek Orthodox versions).

On public holidays, most museums and shops close all over the island.

Festivals & Special Events

For 2 weeks before the 50 days preceding Easter, South Cyprus celebrates Carnival. Visit Limassol on the last Sunday to be in the centre of festivities. Following this, Green Monday (50 days before Greek Orthodox Easter) is the first day of Lent, celebrated with vegetarian picnics in the countryside before the

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE & RAINFALL IN CYPRUS

MONTH	HOURS OF SUNSHINE	RAINY DAYS	MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE (IN °C)	MINIMUM TEMPERATURE (IN °C)	SEA TEMPERATURE (IN °C)
JAN	6	9	15	5	16
FEB	7	8	16	6	17
MAR	7	7	19	7	17
APR	9	3	24	10	18
MAY	11	2	29	14	21
JUNE	12	1	33	19	22
JULY	13	1	37	21	25
AUG	12	1	37	21	28
SEPT	11	1	35	19	27
OCT	9	3	28	15	26
NOV	7	6	22	10	23
DEC	6	9	17	7	19

fasting begins. Easter (Greek Orthodox Church) is the biggest feast of the Greek Orthodox calendar with parades and solemn masses in which icons are draped in black until the celebration of the resurrection. As well as religious events, the Limassol Carnival (Feb–Mar) features 10 days of revelry and masked balls. Anthestiria—Flower Festival (May) includes parades in Limassol, as well as exhibitions of plants and flowers. Kataklysmos—Festival of the Flood occurs in June, with watersports, water fights, singing and dancing in Limassol. The Shakespeare Festival (June) sees his plays staged in the open-air auditorium at Curium, near Limassol. This is followed by the Ancient Greek Drama Festival (July/

August). Limassol Wine Festival (September) is a massive celebration of the wine harvest in the Municipal Gardens—expect folk dancing, singing, eating and a lot of drinking.

Festivals in North Cyprus tend to be small, low-key events. Bellapais holds a Classical Music Festival with concerts in the abbey in May and June (www.bellapaisfestival.com); Gazimağusa has a more eclectic Arts Festival the following month, with performances in the ancient theatre at Salamis (www.magusa.org/festival); and Lefkoşa, Gazimağusa and Girne together hold the International Theatre Festival in mid-August to early September. The Rocks Hotel, Girne, has a small jazz festival in December.

Free Booklets on Cyprus

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation publishes useful free booklets in English on the following:

List of Events: 10,000 years of history and civilisation

Nature Trails: Lots of information on off-the-beaten-track Cyprus

The Cyprus Wine Story: Flavours of Cyprus **Cycling Routes**

The Weather

Cyprus has a typical Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild, humid winters. Sea temperatures are generally warm from May to October. The climate chart below is an average for the whole island. For an up-to-date weather forecast, see http://www.cypyp.com/data_weather.htm.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones work all over Cyprus. There are several service providers and most work for voice and data but check the best roaming charges (it can be extremely high even with global sim cards) with your service provider before leaving home. In

North Cyprus, a cheap option is to buy a local pay as you go sim card, available from two companies, Turkcell or Telsim, who have their own shops in towns and supermarket outlets.

Useful Websites

www.visitcyprus.com The Cyprus Tourism Organisation's website provides comprehensive information.

www.cyprus-travel-secrets.com A good insider's guide.

www.northcyprus.cc The Official Tourism website for North Cyprus.

www.kitsap.org The site of the Cyprus Turkish Tourism and Travel Agencies Association.

Getting There

By Plane

In South Cyprus there are two international airports, Larnaca and Paphos. Larnaca International Airport, the main one, now with a new terminal, is 5km (3 miles) from Larnaca town, 49km (29½ miles) from Nicosia, 70km (44 miles) from Limassol, 46km (28 miles) from Ayia Napa, and 139km (86 miles) from Paphos. For flight information (24 hours) dial ☎ 77 88 33. The tourist information booth is open from 8:15am to 11pm and is worth calling at to pick up a selection of maps. Private, metered taxis wait outside and all the car rental companies have offices here. Paphos International Airport is 15km (9½ miles) from Paphos town and 63km (39 miles) from Limassol.

North Cyprus is not internationally recognised so planes cannot fly there direct. There are two options: fly into Ercan airport in the north, via Turkey, or fly into Larnaca airport in the south. Ercan airport (☎ 0392 231 4806) is about 12km (7½ miles) east of Lefkoşa with a

transfer time of about 40 minutes to both Girne and Gazimağusa. There is no public transport, other than taxis.

From the UK & Ireland:

Scheduled airlines serving South Cyprus include: Cyprus Airways (☎ 020 8359 1333, www.cyprusairways.com); British Airways (☎ 0844 493 0787, www.ba.com); Monarch (☎ 08700 40 50 40, www.flymonarch.com); EuroCypria (☎ 22 365750, www.eurocypria.com); and EasyJet (www.easyjet.com). Flying time is 4½ hours from London.

Scheduled airlines serving North Cyprus include: Cyprus Turkish Airlines (☎ 020 7930 4851, www.kthy.com); Turkish Airlines (☎ 020 7471 6666, www.thy.com); Pegasus Airlines (☎ 0845 084 8980, www.flypgs.com/en). Flying time is just over 6 hours from London (via Turkey); 4½ hours to Larnaca.

Elsewhere in the world:

South Cyprus is well served by flights from its important source

markets like Russia, Scandinavia, Germany, Britain and the United Arab Emirates. There are no direct flights from the USA but Cyprus Airways has connections to the island from all major European gateways including Rome, Zurich, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London and Athens. There are also excellent connections from the Middle East via Tel Aviv and Cairo.

For North Cyprus, there are some connecting flights from Germany, with the same airlines as listed for the UK (see above), but all other travellers have to fly into Larnaca, or change planes in Turkey.

By Sea

South Cyprus is served by weekly ferries operating between Limassol and Haifa, Israel and Limassol and Port Said, Egypt. Check for schedules and prices on www.varianostravel.com.

To reach North Cyprus there are two ferry companies operating between mainland Turkey and North Cyprus, with car ferries from Taşucu to Gazimağusa, and Girne to Alanya, and faster seabuses between Alanya and Girne. The ferry takes 4 to 5 hours, the seabus takes about 3½ hours. There are also twice weekly ferries between Gazimağusa and Latakia in Syria, try Fergun (☎ 0392 815 1770, www.fergun.net) and Akgünler (☎ 0392 815 6002, www.akgunler.com.tr).

By Package Tour

The majority of European visitors to South Cyprus travel via an organised

tour that includes a package of flights and accommodation. You can find last-minute bargains on sites like Ebookers (www.ebookers.com) and Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) or book through one of the British specialists, who will organise accommodation only if required:

Rent Cyprus Villas (☎ 08701 99 99 66, www.rentcyprusvillas.com); Sunvil Holidays (☎ 020 8758 4747, www.sunvil.co.uk/cyprus—the best operator for villas with pools and agrotourism properties).

A number of tour operators visit North Cyprus, but there are some real specialists, starting with Direct Traveller (☎ 0845 123 5383, www.directtraveller.com) with in-depth local knowledge, flights into Larnaca and Ercan from 18 UK regional airports and a wide range of hotels and excursions in Girne and Gazimağusa. Another excellent operator is Anatolian Sky (☎ 0845 365 1011, www.anatoliansky.co.uk).

Crossing the Land Border

For details of the land border crossings, see p 160. While you may take a car hired in the South into the North, you may not take a northern car into the South. If going north, you will need to buy additional car insurance as your southern policy will not be valid. If you are buying property in the North, do not take any paperwork relating to your property transaction across the border. See also details on duty free, p 162.

Getting Around

In South Cyprus, there is nowhere really more than 2 to 3 hours apart, thanks to the excellent motorway

network. There are no trains and the bus network, although adequate, is not geared up for sightseeing.

Crossing the Green Line

You can visit the north of the island via any of five official crossing points on the 'Green Line', or the Attila Line, as it's also known. There are no longer any restrictions on how long you can stay in the north if you cross over, although most people go for a day trip. These crossing points are located at the following points:

Ledra Palace checkpoint in central Nicosia (pedestrians only)

Lidra Street in Nicosia (opened in 2008 to pedestrians only)

Agios Dometios in Nicosia (pedestrians and vehicles)

Two points in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area: **Black Knight** (near Ayios Nikolaos) and **Pergamos** (near Dhekelia), both for vehicles and pedestrians

Astromeritis (near Morphou) (30km/19 miles west of Nicosia), vehicles and pedestrians

You can take a rental car across but your car rental will require additional insurance. You can't bring a rental car from the Turkish-occupied side into the Republic of Cyprus.

Although North Cyprus is small—96km (60 miles) wide and 224km (140 miles) long, the roads are relatively slow. Public transport is extremely limited. There are some buses between the major towns and a network of *dolmuş* (shared taxis) which pick up and set down on demand along set routes. There are plenty of taxis in the main towns and all the tour operators run pretty much the same set of excursions, with minor variations.

For the whole of Cyprus, car is by far the most practical way to travel, particularly for off-the-beaten-track exploration.

By Car

Driving in Cyprus is on the left. It is compulsory for the driver and front seat passenger to wear a seatbelt and there is effective zero tolerance for drink driving.

To rent a car in the South, drivers must be in possession of a driving licence for at least 3 years or be aged over 25. Consider upgrading

to a car with air conditioning if you're travelling from June to October.

Roads in South Cyprus are excellent. Motorways connect the capital, Nicosia with the coastal cities of Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos and Ayia Napa. Minor roads and forest roads are often unsurfaced, but in good condition (except when they run out and become dirt tracks). Distances and speed limits are posted in kilometres and kilometre per hour (km/h) respectively. The maximum speed limit on motorways is 100km/h (60mph) and the minimum is 65km/h (40mph). The use of seatbelts is compulsory both in the front and back, while the use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited while driving.

A word of warning about petrol stations: there are not as many as you might imagine. If you're driving between two major towns and need to refuel, do so before leaving the urban area.

For car rental from Larnaca airport: Andreas Petsas & Sons (☎ 24 643 350); Budget Car Rental (☎ 24 643 293; email: budgcar@cytanet.com.cy); Hertz Rent-a-Car (☎ 24 643 388; www.hertz.com.cy); Thrifty Car Rental (☎ 24 643 375).

Rentals from Paphos airport: Andreas Petsas & Sons (☎ 26 423 046); Budget Car Rental (☎ 26 953 824); Hertz Rent-a-Car (☎ 26 933 985); Sixt Rent a Car (☎ 26 422 910; www.sixt.com.cy).

In the North, driving is on the left and the minimum driving age is 18. The speed limit is 100km/h (60mph) on motorways, 60km/h (40mph) on smaller back roads and 50km/h (30mph) in urban areas. Petrol stations are not frequent outside the main towns; they are all full service and generally remain open until 9pm or 10pm daily.

None of the major car hire companies have offices, but there are many local operators, some offering rent-a-wrecks at bargain-basement prices. All rental cars have a 'Z' number plate. Minimum hire age is 21 (23 or 25 with many companies). You will need a clean national or international driving licence. Third-party insurance is compulsory, but it is worth getting fully comprehensive, just in case. Make sure that your car hire company offers guaranteed 24-hour service, so you can be rescued in case of breakdown. Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) premiums are generally not high here, but if you want to avoid them, www.insurance4carhire.co.uk run an excellent year-round insurance policy that will ensure your CDW. Oscar Rent a Car, Girne (☎ 0392 815 2272; www.oscar-rental.com); Sur Rent a Car (☎ 0533 841 7979;

www.surcarhire.com); Sun Rent a Car (☎ 0392 227 2303; www.sunrentacar.com).

By Taxi

There are three types of taxi in South Cyprus. Shared taxis are minibuses that split the cost between four and eight people, and pick up from agreed points (usually your hotel). They connect major urban centres from Monday to Friday between 6am and 6pm, weekends between 7am and 5pm, and don't operate on public holidays. They also don't serve the airports or connect towns and villages.

Rural taxis can only be hired from and to their base station. If you're in a rural area and need a taxi, your best bet is to enquire at the local taverna, which will usually call one for you. Urban taxis provide a 24-hour service and can be booked or hired on the street. They are equipped with meters.

In North Cyprus, you can find taxis at stands in the main towns or ask someone to call one for you. Fares are set by the government, but you may find that drivers prefer to negotiate. Remember to ask if you want the taxi to wait and bring you back or you could get stranded. Restaurants in Bellapais will provide a free taxi to and from your Girne hotel.

Local taxi companies include: North Cyprus Taxis (☎ 0533 841 1758; www.northcyprustaxis.com); Bellapais Taxi (☎ 0392 815 7563; www.bellapaistaxi.com). In Gazimagusa, Rašit Ašikoğlu (☎ 0533 876 5616) is an excellent taxi driver, who speaks fluent English and is a great tour guide!

Fast Facts

APARTMENT & VILLA RENTALS www.ownersdirect.co.uk; www.northcyprusrentals.com.

ATMS ATMs are available in all the major population centres.

BANKING HOURS In **South Cyprus** banks open from 8:15am to 12:30pm, Monday to Friday, sometimes for longer hours in the tourist areas. In the **North**, banks open weekdays 8am to 4pm, closing between midday and 2pm.

BUSINESS HOURS Business hours in **South Cyprus** are 9am till around 7pm in winter and till around 8:30pm in summer. Many shops close early on Wednesdays, and in summer will take a siesta between 2pm and 5pm. Shops are open later on Fridays—till around 9pm—and are closed on Sundays. In **North Cyprus** shops are usually open 8am to 1pm and 2pm to 5:30pm Monday to Saturday in winter, 7:30am to 1pm, 4pm to 6pm in summer; some shut on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. In tourist areas shops may remain open until 10pm and are normally closed on Sundays and public holidays.

CREDIT CARDS Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted in most outlets; American Express and Diners Club less so. Some rural tavernas only take cash.

CUSTOMS If you are travelling outside of the EU, duty-free allowance for adults is 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g (8.8oz) of tobacco, 1 litre of spirits, 1 litre of wine, with 60ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette. NB: if flying from Ercan you can take your duty-free allowance home. However, if flying from Larnaca, there

are far tighter limits (strictly policed) on the amount of alcohol and tobacco you may carry across the land border, currently limited to 40 cigarettes and 1 litre of alcohol for personal consumption.

ELECTRICITY 220–240 volts, single phase, 50 cycles with British-style 13-amp, three-pin, rectangular plugs.

EMBASSIES The **Southern Cyprus** embassies and consulates are all in Nicosia. The **Australian Embassy** is at 4 Annis Komninis Street, 2nd Floor, 1060 Nicosia (☎ 22 753 001). The **British Embassy**, which also has a consular section, is at Alexandrou Palli Street (☎ 22 861 200), while the **US Embassy** is at Metochiou & Ploutarchou Corner, 2407 Engomi, Nicosia (☎ 22 393 939).

North Cyprus is not recognised by any country other than Turkey so has no embassies. It has representative offices in London and Washington (p 156). Diplomatic representation is handled elsewhere by Turkey.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE Police/Fire ☎ 155, Ambulance ☎ 112.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS Male homosexuality is technically illegal in North Cyprus, although the law hasn't been used for years. However, travellers should remember that this is still a fairly conservative Muslim community and behave accordingly.

HEALTH Before you arrive, no inoculations are necessary. Standards of health and hygiene are high, but visitors should be careful of the sun and heat in high summer and watch where they put their hands and feet

if walking (there are biting insects and snakes).

There are two types of hospital in **South Cyprus**: Government General Hospitals, all of which have an A&E department (emergency room); and private clinics, only some of which take A&E cases.

In **North Cyprus**, a list of doctors is available in the local Yellow Pages. Pharmacies can be used to treat minor ailments and can often prescribe a wider range of medications without a doctor's prescription than in the UK. A list of out-of-hours duty chemists is published in English-language papers.

INSURANCE Always travel with adequate insurance cover. EU citizens should travel with a European Health Insurance Card, which entitles you to free or reduced state medical treatment if you should need care while in South Cyprus. If you plan to undertake high-risk activities such as diving, make sure your policy covers these activities.

INTERNET ACCESS There are internet cafes in the tourist areas and most hotels have computers for guest use; you pay for time online. Free Wi-Fi is available at an increasing number of hotels, but only a few cafes.

MAIL & POSTAGE In the **South**, you can send letters from post offices located throughout the island and at the airports, or use the yellow mailboxes on the street. Stamps may be purchased from all post offices and postal agencies, as well as from many hotels, news stands, kiosks, etc. Post office opening hours are generally 7:30am to 1:30pm and 3pm to 6pm Monday to Friday, closed Wednesday afternoons. Saturday opening is 8:30am to 10:30am in major towns.

North Cyprus isn't part of the world's official postal system and is routed via Turkey, so stamps from here have value for collectors. Stamps are usually available from hotels as well as post offices. Post offices open Monday to Friday 8am to 1pm, 2pm to 5pm, Saturday 9am to midday in winter, Monday to Friday 7:30am to 2pm, 4pm to 6pm, Sat 8:30am to 12:30pm.

MONEY & EXCHANGE BUREAUX The currency of Cyprus is the euro. One euro is divided into 100 cents. Notes in circulation come in 5€, 10€, 20€, 50€, 100€, 200€ and 500€ denominations. Coins come in denominations of 2€, 1€, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents. **North Cyprus** uses the Turkish lira (YTL), which is divided into 100 kuruş. However most traders are equally happy to deal in euros, British pounds or US dollars and major credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs and exchange bureaux can be found in the main towns.

PHARMACIES Most pharmacists in the tourist areas speak English and will be able to advise on minor ailments.

SAFETY The crime rate is low, but visitors should take the usual precautions with valuables and personal safety.

SMOKING Smoking is still permitted in bars and restaurants in the **South**, although many places have a separate smoking area. In the **North**, smoking is banned in all public venues.

TIME GMT +2 in winter; GMT +3 in summer.

TIPPING Service is usually included in hotels. Tip 10% in restaurants, or round up the bill, and offer taxi drivers 5 to 10%.

Tourist Guides

Tour guides in Cyprus attend a special tourist guide school and are all licensed by the **Cyprus Tourism Organisation** when they pass their exams. They complete a 1-year course which includes topics such as archaeology, geology, Byzantine and medieval history, nature, arts and crafts, food and wine. Although it's expensive, if you're travelling as a group it may be worth hiring your own guide for a more in-depth look at the island—or perhaps a tour more geared to your family's interests. You can contact a guide directly via the website **www.cytouristguides.com** where there is a helpful listing of guides in each of the main towns, with details of the languages they speak. The website also displays the fees charged by a guide which start at 75.99 € for a half day, 119.57 € for a full day with supplements for public holidays, Sundays or activities like trekking. Bear in mind that a good guide is likely to be fully booked in the summer, so plan ahead if you decide to go down this route.

 +357 22 765755 or email cytouristguides@cytanet.com.cy.
You can also enquire in any tourist information office.

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) has offices all over the South including **Larnaca** ( 24 654 322); **Nicosia** ( 22 674 264); **Limassol** ( 25 362 756); **Paphos** ( 26 930 521).

For **Northern** offices, see chapters on Girne (p 139), Lefkoşa (p 150), and Gazimağusa (p 145).

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Many of the hotels and some self-catering accommodation are equipped with wheelchair ramps. Wheelchairs and scooters can be rented in Limassol and there are several tour companies which are happy to take wheelchair passengers, with advance notice. For detailed information on equipment hire and accommodation, visit www.paraquip.com.cy, a very helpful website run by a disabled Cypriot and packed with information on everything from wheelchair ramps

on the beaches to where to try parascending. The Cyprus Tourism Organisation also has a useful section on its website, www.visitcyprus.org.cy.

North Cyprus can be difficult for travellers with disabilities, with few facilities, rough, uneven ground at access sites. Wheelchairs, scooters and bicycles can be hired from Enable Holiday Mobility in **Alsancak** ( 0542 872 5198; www.enableholidaymobility.com).

VAT South Cyprus has four rates of VAT: 15%, 8%, 5% and 0%. VAT is automatically included in prices shown so should not be a concern. VAT refunds can be claimed at Larnaca and Paphos airports before passport control.

In the **North**, VAT is known locally as KDV, with rates varying from 0% for basic foods to 20%. It is possible for foreigners to claim back

the tax on some purchases at Ercan airport on departure.

WATER Tap water is safe to drink in **South Cyprus**. Water pollution is negligible and every home has fresh running drinking water. On some of

the mountain walks, you'll find fresh water in springs, channelled through drinking fountains. In the **North**, you may prefer to stick to bottled mineral water to be on the safe side.

Cyprus: A Brief History

7000 B.C. The oldest known settlement in Cyprus dates back to the Neolithic Age, **7000 to 3900 B.C.** during which time a civilisation developed along the north and south coasts, using stone tools and later, after **5000 B.C.**, clay pots.

2500 B.C. By about **2500 B.C.**, the inhabitants of the island had discovered its copper reserves and were mining the metal. By the Bronze Age, which lasted from **2500 to 1050 B.C.**, Cyprus was getting rich from exporting its copper and had started to trade

with Arabia, Egypt and the Aegean region.

AROUND 1400 B.C. Mycenaeans from the Greek islands reached the country and settled. This is how Cyprus acquired the Greek language, religion and habits. It was also the time that cities like Paphos and Kourion were founded. Cyprus became more prosperous over the centuries but began to fall prey to waves of invaders. Assyrians, Egyptians and Persians attempted to invade, the Persians successfully.

Cypriots & Ties Abroad

The majority of the population of Cyprus (84.1%) is Greek Cypriot and Christian Orthodox. Turkish Cypriots, who make up 11.7% of the population, are Sunnite Muslims. However, the island still has strong links with the UK, which administered Cyprus as a colony from 1878 until independence in 1960. The UK then retained two **Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs)** for its own defence purposes. So Britain still has strong ties with the island and has left its legacy, including driving on the left, a similar legal system to that of the UK, and a widespread understanding of English.

There are currently some 270,000 Cypriots living in the UK, out of an estimated half a million living overseas. Around 30,000 live in the USA and 22,000 in Canada, but the British Cypriot expat population is by far the largest. So every Cypriot you will meet will know someone in the UK, have lived in the UK, have a business connection with the UK or at least have some understanding of where you come from and what it's like there.

Richard the Lionheart

Richard the Lionheart landed at Limassol in 1191 en route to his third crusade, accompanied by his French fiancée, Berengaria of Navarra, when their ship was wrecked in a storm. Richard's stay turned out to be longer than planned as he ended up in battle against the island's ruler, Isaac Komnenos, and after defeating him, married Berengaria at Limassol Castle, crowning her Queen of England.

Richard had conquered Cyprus but was short of funding for his crusades, so sold the island to the Knights Templar in 1192 to raise money for an army. However, the conditions of the sale made the Templars unable to rule, as they did not have the necessary funds to pay Richard any more after they had put down $\frac{1}{10}$ of the price he asked. To raise the rest of the money, they taxed the Cypriot people, who rebelled and were cruelly crushed by the Templars.

The Templars eventually gave Cyprus back to Richard, who promptly sold it to Guy de Lusignan, a Norman knight, whose family ruled the island for nearly 300 years, until the Venetians annexed it for themselves in 1489.

333 AND 325 B.C. Help arrived between **333** and **325 B.C.**, when Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and made Cyprus part of his empire. But Alexander's generals squabbled amongst themselves and Cyprus was eventually handed over to the Hellenistic state of the Ptolemies of Egypt. Paphos became the capital and the island continued to prosper.

FROM 58 B.C. TO A.D. 330 Cyprus was part of the powerful Roman Empire. First, it was a province of Syria and later, a separate, independent province governed by a proconsul. Two missionaries, St Paul and St Barnabas, arrived on the island and converted the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, to Christianity. Cyprus thus became the first country in the world to be governed by a Christian.

4TH CENTURY A.D. The main cities of the island were completely wiped out in the 4th century A.D. by

massive earthquakes. By now, the Islamic religion was spreading and in **647** Arabs invaded the island and wrecked the city of Salamis. For the next few decades, the Cypriot people suffered terribly, moving away from the coast and the constant raids.

688 Emperor Justinian II and Caliph al-Malik signed a treaty neutralising Cyprus but the island continued to be attacked by pirates until **965** when Emperor Nikiforos II Fokas regained Cyprus as a Byzantine province and expelled the Arab invaders.

The island prospered for a few decades until the self-proclaimed Governor Isaac Komnenos mistakenly took on the might of King Richard the Lionheart of England (Richard I), who took possession of the island. Richard then sold the island to the Knights Templar for 100,000 dinars but the knights couldn't afford the upkeep of

Cyprus and in **1192**, sold it on to Guy de Lusignan, a French-speaking Crusader Knight, at the time, also King of Jerusalem.

The Catholic Church soon replaced the Greek Orthodox that was so well established, although the Greek Orthodox religion survived, mainly thanks to the orthodox monks who retreated to the Troodos Mountains and built churches and monasteries, decorated with rich frescoes.

Nicosia became capital and the seat of the Lusignan kings. The Lusignan dynasty ended when the last queen Catherina Cornaro gave up Cyprus to Venice in **1489**.

1489 TO 1571 The Venetians ruled but were both inefficient and corrupt and in **1570**, Turkish forces successfully invaded the island. A long siege followed, during which the whole population of Nicosia, 20,000, was slaughtered. Cyprus was now part of the Ottoman Empire. The Catholic rulers were either expelled or converted to Islam and the Greek Orthodox faith was restored. 20,000 Turks were settled on the island.

1878 Turkey reached an agreement with Britain that Turkey would retain sovereignty of Cyprus and Britain would administer it. The other half of the deal was that Britain would help protect Turkey's Asian territories from the Russians.

BY 1914 World War I had broken out and Britain took overall control of Cyprus when Turkey sided with Germany. In **1923** under the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey renounced any claim to Cyprus. In **1925** Cyprus was declared a Crown colony and in World War II, Cypriots served in the British forces.

The Greek Cypriots were desperate for independence and some kind of union with Greece. The Turkish Cypriots, however, wanted the island to be part of Turkey, or at least to be divided. An Armed Liberation Struggle (enosis) broke out in **1955**, headed by Archbishop Makarios, and lasted until **1959**.

1960 Cyprus finally gained independence after the Greek and Turkish communities reached a grudging agreement on a constitution. Part of the deal was that Britain would retain sovereignty over two military bases, which are still occupied today.

UNTIL 1963 the two sides coexisted unhappily until violence erupted, stirred up by Makarios and further dividing the Greek and Turkish communities.

Makarios played a dangerous game between Russia, Greece and Turkey, and the USA, Britain and Greece cooperated in staging a coup in **July 1974** to oust him and install a government more friendly to the west. Makarios escaped and 5 days later, Turkey invaded the island, quickly occupying 37% of the land.

Since then, peace talks have started, collapsed and finished, over and over again. Some 2,400 UN peacekeepers still patrol the buffer zone that separates the two sectors of the island.

Plans to reunify the island continue to move very slowly, with many failed attempts, although in **2003**, Turkish and Greek Cypriots were allowed to cross the Green Line for the first time since the invasion when the Turks eased the border controls. Nicosia, however, remains the world's last divided capital city and the 'Cypriot problem' remains unresolved.

National Parks in Cyprus

Cyprus has a few areas of designated National Parks, which protects them from building. These are very popular at weekends, for hiking, picnicking and in some cases, visiting unspoilt beaches.

Troodos National Forest Park, with an area of 9,307 hectares, was declared as such in 1992, while four areas within the main park were declared as Nature Reserves. Troodos National Forest Park hosts not only the largest number of plants compared to any other area of Cyprus but also the largest number of endemic plants. It has been designated as one of only 13 'Plant Diversity Hot Spots' in the Mediterranean.

There are several, much smaller National Forest Parks, including **Cape Greco**, in the southeast part of the island; **Athalassa National Forest Park** near Nicosia; **Paedagogical Academy National**

Forest Park, also near Nicosia; **Polemídia National Forest Park** near Limassol; and **Rizoelia National Forest Park** near Larnaca. **Tripylos Natural Reserve**, with an area of 823 hectares, including the famous Cedar valley, is the first declared Nature Reserve. The **Akamas Peninsula** in the northwest is probably the most famous National Forest Park. It's a spacious 155 sq km of scrubland, dramatic cliffs, gorges, beaches and rocky shores, and is home to several unique species of flora and fauna. There are no roads as such, just dirt tracks, and a four-wheel-drive is advisable if you're planning to go deep into the park.

Lara-Toxeftra, a particular area of Akamas, is a marine reserve, and green and loggerhead turtles lay their eggs every year on Lara Beach (see p. 45).

Greek Language

Basic Vocabulary & Phrases

ENGLISH	GREEK	PRONOUNCIATION
Hello/goodbye	Γειά σου Γειά σας	Ya-soo (singular, informal); Ya-sas (plural, singular polite)
Good morning	Καλημέρα	Ka-li-me-ra
Good afternoon/ evening	Καλησπέρα	Ka-li-spe-ra
Goodnight (night)	Καληνύχτα	Ka-li-nich-ta (nik-ta)
Yes	Ναι	Nai
No	Όχι	O-hi
Please/you're welcome	Παρακαλώ	Pa-ra-ka-lo
Thank you (very much)	Ευχαριστώ (πολή)	Ef-ha-ri-stow (po-lee)
How are you?	Τι κά νετε?	Ti ka-ne-te?
Fine, thank you	Μιά χαρά, ευχαριστώ	Mya ha-ra, ef-ha-ri-stow

Learn the Greek

One thing you'll notice while getting around Southern Cyprus is the use of alternative place names. In recent years, using an official system of transliteration from the Greek alphabet, names have changed as follows:

Nicosia becomes Lefkosia

Limassol becomes Lemesos

Paphos becomes Pafos

Ayia Napa becomes Agia Napa

Larnaca becomes Larnaka

Famagusta becomes Ammochostos

Off the beaten track, I highly recommend learning the Greek alphabet in capitals as villages may not be signposted in English.

ENGLISH	GREEK	PRONOUNCIATION
Excuse me	Συγνώμη	Sig-no-mi
Sorry	Σόρι	So-ry
Give me . . .	Μου δώστε . . .	Mou dhos-te . . .
Do you speak English?	Μιλάτε αγγλικά?	Mi-la-te Angli-ka?
I understand	Καταλαβαίνω	Ka-ta-la-ve-no
I don't understand	Δεν καταλαβαίνω	Dhen ka-ta-la-ve-no
I know (it)	Το ξέρω	To gze-ro
Where is . . .	Που είναι . . .	Pou ee-ne . . .
the station	Ο σταθμός	o stath-mos
a post office	Το ταχυδρομείο	to ta-chi-dhro-mee-o
a bank	Η τράπεζα	ee tra-pe-za
a hotel	Το ξενοδοχείο	to xe-no-dho-hee-o
a restaurant	Το εστιατόριο	to estia-tow-ree-o
a pharmacy/chemist	Το φαρμακείο	to farma-kee-o
the toilet	Η τουαλέτα	ee tooa-le-ta
a hospital	Το νοσοκομείο	to no-so-ko-mee-o
Left	Αριστερά	A-ri-ste-ra
Right	Δεξιά	Dhex-ya
Straight	Ευθύα	Ef-thee-a
Tickets	Εισιτήρια	Ee-see-tee-ria
How much does it cost?	Πόσο κάνει?	Po-so ka-ni?
A one-way ticket	Ενα απλό εισιτήριο	E-na ap-lo is-i-ti-rio
A round-trip ticket	Ενα εισιτήριο με επιστροφή	E-na is-i-ti-rio me e-pi-stro-fi
Is there a discount for . . .	Ηπάρχει έκπτωση για . . .	Ee-par-hi ek-ptō-si yia . . .
family	Οικογένεια	ee-ko-gen-ya
children	Παιδιά	pe-dhia
students	Φοιτητές	fee-tee-tes
seniors	συνταξιούχοι	syn-da-xi-ou-hos

Cypriot Candy

You'll see boxes of *loukoumi* for sale all over the island. Its preparation is complicated, so do try it!

The method involves several steps. First, a huge cauldron of water is placed over a hot fire. When the water boils, sugar is added and this mixture is boiled for another hour. The mixture is stirred continuously using an electric paddle. This is followed by adding starch, and the mixture is further boiled for 5 to 6 hours, until it becomes shiny and smooth.

After allowing it to cool for some time, different flavours are added to the mixture – maybe almond, cherry, chocolate, lemon or rose (which is made locally). The flavoured mixture is poured into huge wooden trays for setting.

It takes almost 5 hours to set and then the mixture is cut into squares, dusted generously with icing sugar and packed into small boxes lined with greaseproof paper.

Cyprus also produces more-ish sugared almonds, grown locally, freshly roasted and covered with a creamy coloured sugar coating. The almonds are first washed, roasted slowly and then put into a copper cauldron. Sugar syrup is used to baste the nuts. Once they are evenly coated with the syrup, the nuts are cooled slightly. The process is repeated a few times so there are several layers of sugar, and then the nuts are cooled properly and boxed.

ENGLISH	GREEK	PRONOUNCIATION
What time is it?	Τη ώρα είναι?	Ti o-ra ee-ne?
When?	Πότε?	Po-teh?
When does (it) leave?	Πότε φεύγει?	Po-teh fev-gi?
This	Αυτό	Af-tow
Here	Εδώ	Eh-dho
There	Εκεί	Eh-key

Numbers

One	Ενα	E-na
Two	Δύο	Dhee-o
Three	Τρία	Tree-a
Four	Τέσσερα	Te-se-ra
Five	Πέντε	Pen-de
Six	Έξι	E-xi
Seven	Επτά	Ep-ta
Eight	Οκτώ	Ok-to
Nine	Εννιά	En-ya
Ten	Δέκα	Dhe-ka
Eleven	Έντεκα	En-dhe-ka
Twelve	Δωδεκα	Tho-dhe-ka
Thirteen	Δεκατρία	Dhe-ka-tree-a
Fourteen	Δεκατέσσερα	Dhe-ka-te-se-da

ENGLISH	GREEK	PRONUNCIATION
Fifteen	Δεκαπέντε	Dhe-ka-pen-de
Sixteen	Δεκα-έξι	Dhe-ka-eh-xi
Seventeen	Δεκα-επτά	Dhe-ka ep-ta
Eighteen	Δεκα-οχτώ	Dhe-ka ok-to
Nineteen	Δεκα-εννιά	Dhe-ka en-ya
Twenty	Εικοσι	Ee-ko-see
Thirty	Τριάντα	Tri-an-da
Forty	Σαράντα	Sa-ran-da
Fifty	Πενήντα	Pe-nin-da
One hundred	Εκατό	Eh-ka-to

Menu Terms

Food	Φαγητό	Fa-gee-to
Water	Νερό	Neh-ro
Coffee	Καφέ	Ca-feh
Tea	Τσάι	Tsa-ee
A kilo/half-kilo of red/white wine	Ενα κιλό/Μισό κιλό κόκκινο/άσπρο κρασί	Ena kee-lo/mi-so kee-lo kok-kino/as-pro kra-see
The bill please	Το λογαριασμό παρακαλώ	To lo-ga-ri-az-mo pa-ra-ka-lo

* Roll the r's so they sound like a soft d. Dh sounds like "the".

Turkish Language

The official language in North Cyprus is Turkish, although many people speak at least a smattering of English and it is easy to get by. Atatürk switched Turkish to a western alphabet in the 1920s and it is phonetically logical as long as you know a few basic rules:

- c pronounced 'j'; as in 'jam'
- ç pronounced 'ch'; as in 'check'
- ğ is silent, prolonging the sound of the vowel in front of it
- ş is pronounced 'sh'; as in 'shirt'
- ı is pronounced 'er'; as in 'ermine'

If you want to try speaking Turkish, here are some useful words and phrases.

Basic Vocabulary & Phrases

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONUNCIATION
Yes	Evet	(evet)
No	Yok/hayır	(yok/highur)
OK	Tamam	(tammam)
Please	Lütfen	(lootfen)
Thank you	Teşekkür ederim	(teshekoor ed-er-eem)
You're welcome	Bir şey değil	(beer shay dayil)
Hello	Merhaba	(mare-harba)
Goodbye	Hoşca kalın/Allaha ismarlardık	(hoshka kalin/ Alla-har ismarlardik)

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONUNCIATION
Pleased to meet you	Çok memnun oldum	(chok memnoon oldoom)
My name is...	Adım	(adum)
How are you?	Nasılsınız?	(nasool - sunuz)
Excuse me (in a crowd)	Affedersiniz	(affeder - sunuz)
Excuse me (to get attention from a waiter)	Bakar mısınız?	(backar musunuz)
Excuse me (sorry)	Pardon	
God willing	İnşallah	(inshallah)
I don't understand	Anlamıyorum	(an-lam-ee-yor-oom)
Do you speak English?	İngilizce biliyor mısınız?	(Toorkchay beeleeeyoor musunuz)
I don't speak Turkish	Türkçe bilmiyorum	(Toorkchay beeleeeyooroom)
I don't know	Bilmiyorum	(beeleeeyooroom)
Where is the...?	Nerede...?	(nayrayday)
Please write it down	Onu benim için heceleyebilir misiniz?	(onoo beneem icheen hedg-el-ey-ebeeleer musunuz)
How much is it?	Ne kadar?	(nay kadar)
Do you take credit cards?	Kredi kartı alırmısınız?	(kraydi kartee alur musunuz)

At the Table

A table for two/four, please	İki/dört kişilik bir masa, lütfen	(ickee/dort kişilik beer massa, lootfen)
Waiter	Garson	(garson)
Menu	Menu	(menoo)
Breakfast	Kahvaltı	(karvaltuh)
Cold/hot starters	Soğuk/sıcak meze	(mezzay)
Meat	Et	(et)
Lamb	Kuzu	(koozoo)
Chicken	Tavuk	(tavook)
Fish	Balık	(balook)
Salad	Salata	(salata)
Olives	Zeytin	(zaytin)
Bread	Ekmek	(ekmek)
Butter	Tereyağı	(tay-ray-ah)
Salt/pepper	Tuz/biber	(tooz/beebair)
Sugar	Seker	(sheckair)
Ice cream	Dondurma	(dondoomar)
With/without (with milk)	Lu/suz (– eg sütlu,	(loo/sooz)
I'm allergic to...	Karşı alerjim var...	(kars/alairjim var)
Water	Su	(soo)
Fizzy water	Soda	(soda)
Milk	Süt	(soot)
Red/white wine	Kırmızı/Beyaz sarap	(kermizi/ bayaz sarap)

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONUNCIATION
Beer	Bira	(beera)
Tea	Çay	(chigh)
Coffee	Kahve (all instant is 'Nescafé')	(kahvay)
Fresh orange juice	Portakal suyu	(portakal sooyoo)
The bill	Hesap	(hesap)

Necessities

Help!	İmdat!	(imdat)
Call a doctor!	Doktor çağırın!	(doctor chaa-irin)
Police!	Polis!	(polis)
Leave me alone	Beni rahat bırakın	(benee raa-hat bur-akin)
Beware/caution	Dikkat	(dikkat)
Stop	Dur	(door)
Military area	Askeri bölge	(asskairee boll-gay)
Ambulance	Ambulans	(amboolans)
Hospital	Hastane	(hastarnay)
Bank	Banka	(banka)
Pharmacy	Eczane	(ekzarnay)
Post office	Posta	(posta)
Open	Açık	(achuk)
Closed	Kapalı	(kaparluh)
Entrance	Giriş	(gurush)
Exit	Çıkış	(chikish)
Toilet	Tuvalet	(toovalet)
Men	Bay	(high)
Women	Bayan	(high-arn)

Numbers

One	Bir	(beer)
Two	İki	(ickee)
Three	Üç	(ooch)
Four	Dört	(dort)
Five	Beş	(besh)
Six	Altı	(altuh)

Recommended Reading

Lawrence Durrell; *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* (a beautifully written account of life on the island in the 1950s); Brendan O'Malley and Ian Craig, *The Cyprus Conspiracy: America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion* (slightly dated but fascinating conspiracy theory about the 'Cyprus problem'); William Mallinson, *Cyprus: A Modern History*; Andreas Koumi, *The Cypriot* (fictional love story set against the conflict in the 1950s); Colin Thubron, *Journey into Cyprus*; Sonia Halliday and Lara Lushington, *Flowers of North Cyprus*.

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONUNCIATION
Seven	Yedi	(yedi)
Eight	Sekiz	(sekiz)
Nine	Dokuz	(dokooz)
Ten	On	(on)
Twenty	Yirmi	(yermee)
Thirty	Otuz	(otooz)
Forty	Kirk	(kerk)
Fifty	Elli	(ellee)
One hundred	Yüz	(yooz)
One thousand	Bin	(bin)

The Calendar

Sunday	Pazar	(pazar)
Monday	Pazartesi	(pazartaysee)
Tuesday	Salı	(saluh)
Wednesday	Çarşamba	(charshamba)
Thursday	Perşembe	(paisembay)
Friday	Cuma	(juma)
Saturday	Cumartesi	(jumartaysee)

Cypriot Food through the Seasons

For an economy that was once entirely rural, the Cypriot year is still very much based around the seasons and special dishes for every month and every occasion. You can have fun discovering these as a family, although some are only available at the time of certain festivals.

On **New Year's Day**, which is known as St Basil's day in Cyprus, each family bakes a special cake known as *Vasilopitta*, not dissimilar from our idea of a Christmas pudding. The person who finds a coin in a slice of cake is supposed to have good luck for the rest of the year.

January isn't normally a time you would associate with fruit harvest but this is when the citrus fruit is picked and you will see lorries piled high with oranges, tangerines, lemons and grapefruit on their way to the ports. Quite a lot of the fruit is exported but often the best way to

buy it is straight from the back of a stallholder's van in the local market.

Carnival in Cyprus comes 2 weeks before the beginning of Lent and is a time of partying and festivity, especially in Limassol. Seasonal specialities at this time of year include a special pastry filled with cheese, called *bourekia*, and sticky sweets made with honey known as *daktyla* and *kandaifi*. Carnival is a pretty decadent time, with parties, street parades and general merriment but on the first day of Lent, things quieten down a bit and families traditionally pack a picnic and head for the countryside where they eat more simple fare of vegetables, bread, salad and village wine.

Lent is a more sombre period and a lot of people still take it very seriously, eating no meat or fish or dairy products. Instead, Cypriots live off the land, eating vegetables,

fruit and pulses, using ingredients including pumpkin, cracked wheat, spinach and greens that grow wild, for which we have no name here.

At **Easter**, rather than stuffing themselves with chocolate, Cypriots make a special soup of eggs and lemon in chicken stock, as well as savoury Easter cakes. Lunch on the Orthodox Easter Sunday is a time when the meat fast is broken and families gather in their gardens to roast huge *souvlaki* on their barbecues.

Summer, when most visitors are likely to be on the island, is a fantastic time for soft fruit and you should have no problem getting your children to eat cherries, apricots, plums and juicy peaches and melons which you will see piled high by the roadside.

September is more about drinking and eating as this is the

traditional time for the wine harvest and a lot of people flock to Limassol for the enormous Wine Festival. Shortly after this comes harvest time when you'll see a lot of dishes featuring almonds, carobs and olives. Try to get your children to try pastelli and carob honey on their toast instead of Nutella!

At **Christmas**, Cypriots don't eat turkey but instead slaughter a pig and even families living in urban areas will make and smoke their own special sausages, called *lou-kanika*. Cypriot Christmas cake will look more familiar, as it's very similar to ours, but if you are spending Christmas on the island also look out for *kourambiedes* – biscuits like shortbread sprinkled with icing sugar and spicy buns which are draped with honey syrup.

Cypriot Coffee

Cypriots tend to assume that foreigners want to drink Nescafé, or instant coffee, which is pretty insipid. Instead, go local and drink the same coffee as the Cypriots. You'll see old men sitting in cafes all day long, playing backgammon, drinking coffee and gossiping.

Most of the coffee drunk in Cyprus comes from Brazil. It's ground up and put into a special coffee pot called a *mbrikia*. Sugar and cold water are added and the coffee is heated until it boils and begins to froth on the top. At this stage, it's poured into small cups and served very strong, always black and always with a glass of water.

If you order a Cypriot coffee, be sure to specify to the waiter how much sugar you want in it. Normally, you can ask for unsweetened, medium sweet or very sweet. When you get to the bottom of the cup, leave a little behind or you will end up with a mouthful of coffee grounds.

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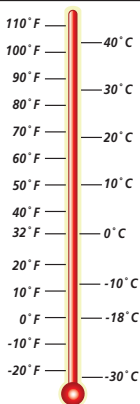
CLOTHING SIZES

WOMEN			MEN			CHILDREN	
UK	US	Europe	UK Metric (cm)	US	Europe	UK Metric (Ht cm)	US
8	6	36	91	36	46	109	4
10	8	38	97	38	48	122	6
12	10	40	102	40	50	140	8
14	12	42	107	42	52	147	10
16	14	44	112	44	54	152	12
18	16	46				157	14
20	18	48					



METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE



To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and multiply
by $\frac{5}{9}$ (.555)

To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8
and add 32

32° F = 0° C

DISTANCE

To convert..... multiply by

inches to centimetres	2.54
centimetres to inches	.39
feet to metres	.30
metres to feet	3.28
yards to metres	.91
metres to yards	1.09
miles to kilometres	1.61
kilometres to miles	.62

1 ft = .30 m 1 mile = 1.6 km
1 m = 3.3 ft 1 km = .62 mile

WEIGHT

To convert..... multiply by

Ounces to grams	28.35
Grams to ounces	.035
Pounds to kilograms	.45
Kilograms to pounds	2.20

1 ounce = 28 grams
1 pound = .4555 kilogram

1 gram = .04 ounce
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert..... multiply by

Gallons to litres	4.55
Litres to gallons	.22
Pints to litres	.56
Litres to pints	1.76



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